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Daily Report
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Key Results

Chernomyrdin on Preparations for Elections

LD2612205995 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1900 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On Tuesday Viktor Chernomyrdin, head of the government, held a conference with those elected to the State Duma from the Russia is Our Home [NDR] movement. At this meeting the prime minister assessed the results of the voting as "normal." The outcome was expected as the movement was connected with the current government and the parties competing against the NDR concentrated their criticism on the government.

Viktor Chernomyrdin considered the 10 percent of the votes cast for NDR as showing the electors' trust in the present course of reforms. However, the prime minister did not rule out making alterations to this course. My colleague Aleksandr Kulikov had a conversation with Viktor Chernomyrdin after the conference in the Lesnyye Dali sanatorium.

[Begin recording] [Kulikov] It is well known that your headquarters will continue to operate after the parliamentary elections. Does this mean that you are beginning to prepare for the presidential elections?

[Chernomyrdin] Our movement was not set up just for elections. NDR is a socio-political movement and I have already said that an executive committee has been set up and will continue to operate. The headquarters will also continue to operate, all the more so since we are approaching the presidential elections. The presidential elections will take place in six months. Of course, we will be preparing for the elections. I will, evidently, be preparing as chairman of the government and as chairman of the movement. We are already carrying out major preparations, in essence. I think that a headquarters will be set up for the presidential elections. We will participate in a big way.

[Kulikov] Will the movement be putting forward its own candidate or will it act in a bloc with other movements that are close to you in spirit?

[Chernomyrdin] With those who are close in spirit. We do not have our own candidate and we will not have our own candidate. [end recording]

Ryabov: Duma Election Results Possible This Week

LD2612182495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1752 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Natalya Panshina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 26 (Itar-Tass) — Official results of elections to the Russia's State Duma can be announced this week and there are no grounds to claim the results had been rigged, according to Nikolay Ryabov, the chairman of the Central Election Commission (CEC).

"The CEC has received practically no complaints" and there are only "general character remarks", Ryabov told a conference in Moscow on Tuesday promising that all the reamrks will be checked.

He ruled out media claims that 47,000 ballots had been added in order to change the balance of political forces in the new parliament.

Ryabov stressed that all reports received from international observers were of "a positive character".

Distribution of Communist Vote Detailed

MM2612132795 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 23 Dec 95 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Close to Attainment of 'Red Majority.' Geography of Voting"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Despite the fact that the final election results have not yet been announced, every day brings increasing clarity, and as the official records come into the Central Electoral Commission a general picture of how Russia voted is becoming discernible. Here is how the federal list voting map looks in the individual regions for the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [KPRF] (in percentages):

Republic of Sakha—Yakutia	17.9
Maritime Kray	17.78
Amur Oblast	34.4
Sakhalin	25.09
Jewish Autonomous Oblast	23.4
Astrakhan Oblast	24
Kurgan Oblast	22.5
Irkutsk Oblast	15.5
Kostroma Oblast	20.1
Buryatia (Ust-Ordinskiy National Okrug)	22.8
Pskov Oblast	22.5
Novgorod Oblast	18
Yamalo-Nenetsk National Okrug	6.4
Karelia	15.7

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Republic of Sakha—Yakutia	17.9
Komi Republic	12
Kemerovo Oblast	48.8
Udmurtia	14.68
Orel Oblast	46
Belgorod Oblast	31
Ulyanovsk Oblast	37
Bryansk Oblast	35.7
Ivanovo Oblast	17.84
Volgograd Oblast	35
Kursk Oblast	37
Dagestan	51
Karachayevo-Cherkessia	42

Some 131 KPRF candidates were running in single-seat districts. As of 21 December information was available indicating that 58 had been elected. From the federal list, according to preliminary data, about 95 Communists can be considered to have been elected. Thus, it can be assumed that the KPRF faction in the Duma will have about 150 out of the 450 seats. How many Russian have demonstrated trust in the Communists? There are 105 million voters in the country. Preliminary estimates indicate that 65 percent, or 68.5 million people, turned out to vote. Of these, 21.8 percent, or around 14 million people, voted for the KPRF.

According to reports from district electoral commissions, as of 21 December Communists nominated from the party (excluding those nominated by voters) had been elected in the following districts:

Adygeyskiy No. 1; Kirovskiy No. 4 (Bashkortostan); Sibayskiy No. 6 (Bashkortostan); Karachayevo-Cherkesskiy No. 15; Barnaulskiy No. 34; Biyskiy No. 35; Kanevskiy No. 39 (Krasnodar Kray); Tuapsinskiy No. 34; Ussuriyskiy No. 51; Georgiyevskiy No. 52 (Stavropol Kray); Stavropolskiy No. 55; Komsomolskiy-na-Amure No. 56; Kotlasskiy No. 60 (Arkhangelsk Oblast); Novooskolskiy No. 63 (Belgorod Oblast); Bryanskiy No. 64; Pochepskiy No. 65 (Bryansk Oblast); Kovrovskiy No. 67 (Vladimir Oblast); Volzhskiy No. 68; Krasnoarmeyskiy No. 69 (Volgograd Oblast); Tsentralnyy No. 71 (Volgograd Oblast); Cherepovetskiy No. 73; Levoberezhnyy No. 75 (Voronezh Oblast); Pavlovskiy No. 76 (Voronezh Oblast); Pravoberezhnyy No. 77 (Voronezh Oblast); Kineshemskiy No. 79 (Ivanovo Oblast); Kemerovskiy No. 88; Leninsk-Kuznetskiy No. 89 (Kemerovo Oblast); Kurskiy No. 96; Lgovskiy No. 97 (Kursk Oblast); Volkhovskiy No. 98 (Leningrad Oblast); Yeletskiy No. 101; Lipetskiy No. 102; Istrinskiy No. 105; Kolomenskiy No. 106; Podolskiy No. 112; Pushkinskiy No. 113 (Moscow Oblast); Semenovskiy No. 121 (Nizhniy Novogorod Oblast); Orskiy No. 133 (Orenburg Oblast); Orlovskiy No. 134; Pervomayskiy No. 136 (Penza Oblast); Belokalitvenskiy No. 142; Taganrogskiy No. 147; Ryazanskiy No. 149; Novokuybyshevskiy No. 151 (Samara Oblast); Promyshlenny No. 152 (Samara Oblast); Balakovskiy No. 156 (Saratov Oblast); Balashovskiy No. 157 (Saratov Oblast); Engelsskiy No. 159 (Saratov Oblast); Sakhalinskiy No. 160; Vyazemskiy No. 168; Smolenskiy No. 169; Michurinskiy No. 170 (Tambov Oblast); Tambovskiy No. 171; Bezhetskiy No. 172 (Tver Oblast); Tverskoy No. 173; Birobidzhanskiy No. 214. [passage omitted]

CPRF Victory Affects Gubernatorial Run-Offs

MM2712115895 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Teymuraz Mamaladze of the IZVESTIYA Analytical Center: "Red Governor Mukha and Other Comrades Have Soared Aloft on the Wings of the CPRF's [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] Success"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Vitaliy Petrovich Mukha, former first secretary of the former Novosibirsk Oblast Committee [Obkom] of the former CPSU considerably outdistanced his rival, the current governor of the oblast, I. Indinok, in the election for the head of the oblast administration. As the results of the preliminary count of votes following the repeat voting which took place last Sunday indicate, he won with a majority of 145,000.

This figure is, of course, important but the following fact is far more indicative: The results of the first round of the gubernatorial elections in the oblast which were held simultaneously with the elections to the Duma, by no means attested to such a patent success for this candidate who was supported by the communists: Mukha was losing to Indinok by 63,000 votes. Something similar also happened in a two-round duel for the post of governor of Tambov Oblast. Here too, the communists' candidate Aleksandr Ryabov, chairman of the oblast duma and member of the Federation Council, by no means outdistanced his rival, Governor Oleg Betin, in the first round. However, in the repeat vote he overtook him.

In both instances we are witnessing a widely known phenomenon of "delayed reaction" [prodlennoye vozdeystviye]; the data on the electoral success of the CPRF at the parliamentary elections published in the

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course of the week — from 17 through 23 December — had a substantial influence on the outcome of the run-off ballot in the elections of the heads of oblast administrations.

It is indicative that where the outcome of the voting was decided against the communists (Nizhniy Novgorod, Maritime Kray, Belgorod, Omsk, Orenburg, and other oblasts) the question of their "breakthrough" ended right there in the first round.

One more word to the wise: Tambov and Novosibirsk are not the whole of Russia, but they are an extremely well polished reflecting facet of Russia. If, according to Zyuganov, (the official data have not yet been published), the CPRF triumphs in 70 of the 89 regions this indisputable victory will continue to work, and is already working at the elections a rank higher than the gubernatorial elections. The momentum of the "Red Breakthrough" is patently bringing about an abrupt turnaround in the electorate's new preferences and it is hard to assert that well before 16 June comes along this momentum will have abated.

Commentary

Yavlinskiy Views Duma Election, Yeltsin

AU2612162495 Munich FOCUS in German 22 Dec 95 p 171

[Interview with Yabloko Chairman Grigoriy Yavlinskiy by unidentified FOCUS correspondent; place and date not given: "Simply Incapable Politically"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [FOCUS] Grigoriy Alekseyevich, what is your explanation for the defeat of the democratic parties [in the Duma elections]?

[Yavlinskiy] I do not see it like that. The fact that my party "Yabloko" has won some 8 percent in this difficult situation gives me hope. We do have big potential.

[FOCUS] Why have you not been able to exhaust it?

[Yavlinskiy] As long as the government calls itself "democratic," it is difficult to prove that we are very different democrats. Also, it was clear from the beginning that it would be very difficult for Gaydar to get over the 5-percent hurdle. If all the democrats had got together, we would all have remained below 5 percent.

[FOCUS] Communist Party Chairman Zyuganov has offered you cooperation. Will you accept the offer?

[Yavlinskiy] His proposal shows that he acknowledges us as a political force. We represent the people who do not want to go on living the way they are living today, but who do not want to return to Communism either. We do not share any common ground with the Communist Party.

[FOCUS] Will you support Zyuganov's vote of no-confidence against the government?

[Yavlinskiy] That would not make any sense. The government continues Yeltsin's policy. The president can appoint another figure — the policy will stay the same.

[FOCUS] Does that mean that you will wait and see until the presidential elections?

[Yavlinskiy] No. There are two very serious problems: Ending the war in Chechnya and the preparations for the presidential election campaign. To end the war we will have to introduce bills.

[FOCUS] ... which will be ignored.

[Yavlinskiy] We are doing what is necessary. But as long as Yeltsin stays president, all the power is in his hands. For years now, foreign taxpayers have been financing the credits with which Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin are conducting an economic policy that brings the Communists and fascists to power.

[FOCUS] Are you expecting a change of course?

[Yavlinskiy] Yeltsin has changed the course toward the winners after every election. Chechnya is the result of Zhirinovskiy being elected.

[FOCUS] Is a new confrontation between East and West possible?

[Yavlinskiy] No. The only problem is that our president has not yet formulated his line of foreign policy clearly. That is just political incapability.

[FOCUS] Does that also apply to NATO's eastward expansion?

[Yavlinskiy] Several people here are dreaming of NATO's eastward expansion: the arms industry, generals, Zyuganov, the Communist Party. We have forces in favor of NATO expansion which are stronger than Warsaw, Prague, and Budapest together. But in fact, our security policy should be oriented toward the southern and southeastern borders — Afghanistan and China.

[FOCUS] Has the time come for a president called Yavlinskiy?

[Yavlinskiy] Nobody in Russia knows whether it is too early or too late. The most important thing is that we have a joint democratic candidate.

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Premier's Talk of CPRF Government Role Hit

MM2612190695 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 27 Dec 95 p 1

[Article by Otto Latsis: "Premier's Compromise With Communists Would Mean End of Reform"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his interview at Vnukovo Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin said that he is considering the possibility of including CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] representatives in the government in view of the results of the State Duma elections since he thinks that it is impossible not to react to the fact that 22 percent of voters voted for the Communists.

It is hard to take seriously the premier's clarification that he will only allow professionals into the government: Only "planned economy" professionals are known among the Communists, not market economy professionals. What is more, their program, which is a very long way from being professional, is well known and contains promises to increase wages, strengthen free education and health care, "boost defense capability" (meaning: increase military spending), and at the same time reduce taxes and prices.

It is also hard to take seriously the reference to voters' wishes: It is well known that no law obliges the head of government to respond to the elections in this way and, if you remember the precedent, in 1993 there was no thought of giving a seat in government to the Zhirinovskiyites, who polled 23 percent of the vote.

Should we assume that wily maneuvering lies behind the premier's words? The following idea is now in vogue among idle thinkers: If you hand over the economy to the Communists, they will ruin everything within six months, and by the time of the presidential elections the people will turn their backs on them. That is a mistake: They will not ruin things in six months since during the reform years the economy's safety margin has to some extent been restored by dogged efforts. The currency reserves of $13-14 billion that have been created, the growing foreign trade surplus, and a monthly inflation rate down from 21 percent to 2-3 percent over the course of the year all make it possible, given the desire to do so, to arrange a "heavenly life" for six months ostensibly thanks to the new government. More economic and social upheaval will inevitably follow, but that will come later.

It is impossible to imagine Viktor Chernomyrdin being satisfied with such naive calculations. There is no point in guessing his secret motives, you have to assess the facts as they stand: The premier is entertaining the possibility of a compromise with the opponents of reform. Is that a sensible means of overcoming the difficulties on the eve of the presidential elections? In our view, this would have "exactly the opposite" effect. After all, voters did not give "Communist and patriotic forces," as Zyuganov loves to put it, a vote of confidence. There has been no increase in the total number of votes cast for the Communists and the "patriots" since 1993: The figure has stayed at roughly 40 percent. The number of votes for supporters of reform has not fallen either: still 60 percent. The people have turned their back not on reforms but on specific reformers, demanding different actions but by no means an about-turn. Voters are unhappy with the present reformers but have not found others, hence the chaotic situation whereby the majority loses to the minority.

In order to rectify the situation it is necessary not to seek support from the Communists, who will not be the friends of Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin — it is necessary to try to regain the support of democratic voters. This means making more determined efforts to secure peace in Chechnya and, of course, removing those members of the government who instigated the war. This means making more decisive efforts to complete financial stabilization as a condition for an economic upturn. Any other approach is evidence of dangerous confusion, which leads to defeat.

V. Chernomyrdin's statement betraying this uncertainty immediately prompted a tougher tone from the Zyuganovites. In conversation with our correspondent Anatoliy Stepov Valentin Kuptsov, first deputy chairman of the CPRF, made a point of stressing that the plenum of his party's Central Committee scheduled for 10-11 January could back Communist participation in the government only provided that there is a change of economic course, in other words, provided that there is capitulation on the main issue of reform and that all the ground that has been won is surrendered, since a change of course Zyuganov-style does not mean cleansing the reform policy of mistakes but renouncing reforms themselves.

Kuptsov was echoed by another Communist leader, Gennadiy Seleznev. In conversation with our correspondent Sergey Chugayev he said that the Russian president should invite the Communist leader to discuss the situation in the country and ask him to submit a candidate for head of government. Incidentally, Seleznev must know that Russia's Constitution and laws contain no such requirements. He went further, emphasizing that unless the executive makes the "necessary changes" to economic policy, the Communists will start campaigning for a change in the Constitution.

Once again it is perfectly well known that the procedure for amending the Constitution is very complex, there

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will be no time before the presidential elections, and the chance of securing the necessary majority at every stage is highly dubious. But how can he not exploit a situation in which the premier has involuntarily played into the opposition's hands? Despite all the former talk of a "government of people's confidence," Communist leaders are not promising to raise immediately the question of no-confidence in the government, aware that this would open the way for the president to dissolve the Duma by means of a phased (owing to time restrictions on the application of Article 117), but very real procedure. That would hardly improve the Communists' positions in the presidential elections. So the requisite militancy is being feigned by means of talk of denouncing the Belovezhskaya agreements and other far from practical steps. In this context the premier's statement came at an extremely opportune moment. But it was a mistake from the viewpoint of the supporters of reform.

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CIS Debt to Russia Exceeds 15 Trillion Rubles

LD2612174295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1549 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — The debt of CIS countries for Russian energy resources exceeds 15 trillion rubles, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said in a message to delegates of a conference of the presidium of the CIS inter-State Economic Committee taking place in Moscow today.

Over 11 months of the current year, 61 billion cubic meters of natural gas, 25 million tonnes of oil and 10 billion kWh of electric energy have been supplied from Russia to the CIS countries, the message says.

"Could such energy credits continue since there are no repayments?" asked Chernomyrdin.

He sees a way out in the transformation of the accumulated debt into the right to own the debtor-enterprises situated in the CIS countries. The message says that attempts to carry out such transformations, which are agreed upon between entrepreneurs, are often blocked at state level.

Chernomyrdin also proposed to pass coordinated measures backed by laws to attract capital investment into the CIS power engineering system.

The Russian representative at the IEC Presidium, Aleksandr Smirnov, said that the federal budget for 1996 earmarks only 200 billion rubles as credits to the CIS countries.

According to him, next year, as distinct from the previous years, these credits will be set aside so that the CIS countries pay for the Russian ready-made products, not the energy supplies.

CIS Membership for 'Dniester Republic' Unlikely

MK2612151895 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Alan Kasayev: "The Dniester Region Has Decided To Join the CIS. The Commonwealth Heads of State Are Likely To Ignore This Wish"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The political flourishes surrounding the immediate future of the Dniester regime (not to be confused with the people living in the Dniester region) have been marked by yet another farce. A much-touted referendum was held on the issue of the Dniester Moldovan Republic's joining the Commonwealth of Independent States. The referendum results could have been predicted: Nearly 90 percent of the participants spoke in favor of joining the CIS. The turnout was also high — more than 60 percent of eligible voters.

The history of the various referenda conducted on the territory of the former USSR is brief but stormy, and its pages are heavily covered with blood — beginning with the era of early sovereignization and [Nagorno] Karabakhization, through referenda in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to referenda on the sovereignty of Russia and the preservation of the Union. That is something to remember. At any rate, the casualties — direct or indirect — have yet to be counted.

The initiators of this latest referendum happily timed it immediately after the Russian elections, where victory was naturally won by allies of the Dniester Moldovan Republic [PMR]. But a mutual misunderstanding is likely to arise. PMR President Igor Smirnov, enlisting the support of his subordinates (it is difficult to call residents of the Dniester region citizens, because they are not quite such even in the PMR itself, let alone in any other countries), decided to join the CIS. His Moscow well-wisher Gennadiy Zyuganov, quite to the contrary, has decided to dissolve the CIS in the very near future, denouncing the Belovezhskaya Forest Agreements. In their time the Bolsheviks spent much effort constructing such historical paradoxes. The next one will now mark the opening of the new political year.

This paradox will be resolved rather easily. The president of the self-proclaimed republic has already said that the referendum is the first step toward the resurrection of the Union. Russian Communists want the same, but they will hardly like it that the initiative comes from the Dniester region — moreover, in such a form. Therefore, the new State Duma will hardly relate well to Tiraspol's initiative. The presidents of the CIS states, who are planning to meet in mid-January, will hardly respond to the Dniester region's request. One of them, namely Mircea Snegur, will be decisively against the very consideration of the issue. Others, primarily Eduard Shevardnadze and Geydar Aliyev, will undoubtedly support Mr. Snegur.

ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 27 Dec

LD2712082195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0708 GMT 27 Dec 95

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] OSCOW, December 27 (Itar-Tass) — Today's Russian leading newspapers continue to pay considerable attention to the past general elections. "It seems," the Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper writes, "that the present situation will not change: Only the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Our Home is Russia and Yabloko will be represented at the new State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) after voting by party lists.

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"Speaking of a new correlation of political forces, analysts mean, above all, the defeat of democrats, Russia's Democratic Choice and other parties, close to it spiritually. What happened as a result of the elections is a natural reaction of people, millions of voters to what was taking place in our country over the past few years."

The Izvestiya newspaper writes that "a compromise between the premier and Communists will mean an end to reforms". The daily runs a commentary by political analyst Otto Latsis who examines a possibility of including representatives from the Russian Communist Party in the cabinet.

The author intimates that such a statement by premier Viktor Chernomyrdin was prompted by fear, if not by panic, for which he sees no grounds.

"If we do not take into account a 'dreadful' representation of Communists at the State Duma," Latsis writes, "the elections showed, in fact, that most voters are not against the course of reforms as such. They are against the way they are implemented and the price which rank-and-file citizens have to pay for the transition of the economy to market relations."

Correct these glaring mistakes, think more about common people and there will be no return to the communist regime is the message which the executive power received on December 17, Latsis notes.

The Argumenty I Fakty weekly claims that "intrigues, invisible to the world, are brewing among newly elected deputies of the State Duma". The post of Duma speaker is the subject of these intrigues.

"Communists are supposed to receive this post due to understandable reasons. The name of Anatoliy Lukyanov (Lukyanov was speaker of the Soviet Union's parliament) is called most often.

"But he has problems. Firstly, they say that he does not like Gennadiy Zyuganov very much. Lukyanov regards the leader of the Russian Communist Party as a mastermind who isolated Russian Communists in the system of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1990, which was the key factor for the collapse of the Soviet Union."

The trade union newspaper Trud writes in an article dealing with the coming presidential elections that "if we take into account the fact that pro-communist forces are better organised, disciplined and can quicker consolidate themselves than democratic parties which lack the above qualities and are now more inclined to disintegration, we shall have possibly the following unthinkable version when Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy vie in run-off elections.

"However, the past elections showed that this pair does not enjoy confidence of the majority of voters who participated in the polls."

The Rossiyskiye Vesti newspaper features an interview with Frants Klintsevich, member of the Council at the Russian President on veterans of the Afghan war, who notes: "The situation of most veterans who participated in the Afghan war, despite various government decisions, remains deplorable as before.

"The lot of invalids of the Afghan war is especially bitter. In actual fact, all of them were left to the mercy of fate, receiving between 150,000 and 200,000 roubles per month, depending on their wounds."

The army newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda devotes its leader to the 400th birth of Ukrainian Hetman Bogdan Khmelnitskiy. "It is regrettable," the daily writes, "that Russia met the 400th birth of Khmelnitskiy without due attention.

"We have limited ourselves to a scientific conference at the Academy of Sciences. It is a pity. Small doubt that Khmelnitskiy is not only and not so much a Ukrainian figure but a valuable asset of our common history."

The Pravda newspaper examines the situation in Russian sea strategic nuclear forces. "One thing is clear: Russia has Typhoon and Delta-4 class submarines for the time being. Nobody will risk to start an armed offensive against it. Is it understandable for those who finance armed forces?

"The matter in question is a purposeful destruction of not only Russia's nuclear deterring potential but also of the industry which created this potential and ensured its work over the past decades."

In the opinion of the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, "various evils ambushed Russians on land and at sea in 1995. They fall to the lot of citizens of only a weak country".

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Yeltsin To Send Kozyrev To Free Pilots

LD2712113195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1120 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Viktor Khrekov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 27 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin instructed Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev on Wednesday to personally visit Kandahar in Afghanistan to free the Russian pilots kept there by the Taliban opposition movement.

The President also told Kozyrev at a meeting in the Barvikha countryside residence to hold talks with the Pakistani leadership to promote the release of the crew.

"The President instructed the minister to make a trip to Kandahar and make a stop-over in Islamabad to meet and hold talks with the Pakistani leadership", Foreign ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told Tass.

Yeltsin "approved the initiatives of the Foreign Ministry to complete the talks with the Talibs and to free the crew of the Russian plane", Karasin said.

Zhirinovskiy Calls NATO Deployment 'War' on Serbs

LD2612174395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1549 GMT 26 Dec 98

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR] Vladimir Zhirinovskiy believes that the December introduction of NATO troops to Bosnia means declaring war against the Serbs, the LDPR press service said in a press release received by Interfax today.

Zhirinovskiy said war had in fact been declared against the Serbs as against a nation which "has not ceded to the Americans' hegemony," the same source said.

"By bringing troops to Bosnia, NATO occupied it," Zhirinovskiy said.

The Unites States "launched an open offensive in the Balkans, which have been known for a long time as Europe's powder-keg," Zhirinovskiy said.

Americans are premeditatedly provoking a third "hot" world war, the LDPR leader said. "Europe has already realized that. French Defense Minister Charles Millon is concerned about the United States arming the Bosnian Muslims," the LDPR press service said.

Americans will stir up trouble and flee like they fled Somalia while all Europeans will have to deal with the aftermath, Zhirinovskiy said.

Zhirinovskiy urged "all Europeans" to "side with peace, immediately end the occupation and blockade of Serbia," the LDPR press service said.

Podkolzin on Commander's Meeting With Mladic

LD2612153795 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1408 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — On Tuesday, deputy commander of Russia's airborne forces Maj. Gen. Nikolay Staskov will report on the work carried out by the Russian reconnaissance group in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the leadership of the General Staff of Russian Armed Forces, commander of Russia's airborne forces Gen. Col. Yevgeniy Podkolzin told Interfax.

Staskov headed a group of officers from the airborne forces staff who were in the Balkans from December 18 in order to coordinate issues on stationing Russian peacekeeping brigade which will participate in operations of multinational forces in Bosnia.

The officers were also tasked to determine regions for accommodating Russian servicemen, storage facilities for material resources and access routes to the region of responsibility of the Russian brigade.

Commenting on mass media reports concerning a meeting between Staskov and commander of the Army of Bosnian Serbs Ratko Mladic, Podkolzin pointed out that "if this meeting actually took place then it discussed only a narrow spectrum of technical issues."

"It primarily concerns problems of withdrawal of the Russian battalion (Russbat-2) from regions near Sarajevo avoiding possible incidents," Podkolzin said. The battalion has concluded its activity as the United Nations finished its peacekeeping operations in this region. The battalion will be withdrawn through the territory of Bosnian Serbs. "We must solve the problem of withdrawal of about 500 Russian paratroopers, of their military equipment and material resources."

There exists a plan to transfer Russbat-2 to Eastern Slavonia (a part of Croatia populated with Serbs - IF), to the region of stationing of the first Russian peacekeeping battalion, according to Podkolzin. However, this issue will be finally solved at the session of the U.N. Security Council which is likely to be held January 5-8.

Official Claims No IFOR Mandate on War Criminals

LD2612155495 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1408 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) has

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no clear-cut mandate for the detention of individuals accused of perpetrating war crimes by the World Court in the Hague, Russian diplomatic circles told Interfax in response to western reports saying a NATO military command representative was critical of a recent meeting between Bosnian Serb Military Commander Ratko Mladic and Deputy Commander of the Russian Paratrooper Force Nikolay Staskov.

Staskov led a reconnaissance team of Russian officers authorized to agree the deployment site and location of IFOR's Russian contingent in Bosnia.

The NATO representative said Mladic was declared a war criminal by the international court and liable for arrest by the NATO force and those who help it, including the Russians.

In this connection, one Russian diplomat said the Russian contingent was assigned to areas controlled by Bosnian Serbs, and therefore "contacts with Bosnian Serb political and military leaders on deployment-related issues are inevitable."

He said critical statements by NATO representatives had purely political overtones. "We do not choose our interlocutors. If Bosnian Serbs appoint other military officials, we will have business with them," he said.

Moscow Denounces Rights Violations by Croatians

LD2612132295 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1302 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Valeriy Sevryukov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman has described as "unprecedented, gross and massive" the violation by Croatian authorities of the norms of international humanitarian law with regard to Serbs. Facts of such violations were cited in a report of the U.N. Secretary-General, drawn up in accordance with a resolution of the U.N. Security Council.

"Those facts are especially meaningful, because they were collected by the U.N. personnel and representatives of other influential international organizations," Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told Tass. In the face of the proved facts of murders in Kraina, the setting on fire of houses belonging to Serbs and the looting, committed by Croatian troops, Zagreb had to admit all those violations. However, the Croatian government has not yet taken any steps for calling to account those guilty of them, Karasin stressed.

He said that, in connection with continuing serious violations of the rights of Serb population, the U.N. Security Council approved on Russia's initiative a statement of the Security Council Chairman, which denounced the actions of Croatian authorities with regard to the Serb population.

On the same day Sergey Lavrov, Russia's representative at the United Nations Organization, submitted at a meeting of permanent representatives of member states of the Contact Group a draft resolution of the Security Council, prepared by Russia, about Zabreb's violations of the international humanitarian law and human rights. "We are positive that the draft document will become a basis for working out a final text of the resolution, which will reaffirm, among other things, the impermissibility of different approaches of the world community to one and the same crimes and the need for equal and emphatic denunciation of those crimes irrespective of who committed and continues to commit them," The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

Envoy Conveys New Nagorno-Karabakh Initiatives

LD2612155795 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1456 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — Russia's new initiatives to settle the conflict surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh aim to remove obstacles in the negotiation process which have appeared recently, Russian presidential envoy to Karabakh and ambassador Vladimir Kazimirov told Interfax Tuesday.

He returned from Transcaucasia on Monday, having handed over private messages containing new initiatives from Russian President Boris Yeltsin to the leaders of the conflicting parties.

Having noted that he is not authorized to disclose the essence of these Russian proposals aimed at the resolution of "several key settlement problems," Kazimirov underlined that "maximum flexibility" is the characteristic on which their approach is based.

Russia's priority goal is to conclude a political agreement which must fix the 19-month truce in this region.

"We hope this document will solve a wide spectrum of issues, but not by means of delays during its preparation," Kazimirov said.

"It would be possible to continue intensive work on the document after its signing, if several issues are not solved before that time, in order to reach comprehensive settlement of this conflict."

The political treaty should make obligatory "the minimum necessary agreements," Kazimirov said. Among them are "ceasefire and stoppage of hostilities, liquidation of the major consequences of this conflict, in particular, liberation of the occupied territories, entire repa-

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triation of prisoners of war and hostages which to date has been only half resolved, return of refugees, restoration of communication networks and energy lines."

Speaking about the conflicting parties' reaction to Russia's new initiatives, Kazimirov reported that the Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders welcomed Boris Yeltsin's address and expressed their intention "to respond with appropriate messages in a constructive mood."

According to Kazimirov, the order of discussion of Russia's proposals will be determined together with the conflicting parties and the co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk conference from Finland.

The next round of the negotiations on the Karabakh settlement is scheduled for January in Moscow, Kazimirov said. At the same time he stressed the need to consider unsolved problems at a higher level.

For details see Interfax Diplomatic Panorama of December 26.

Financial Obligations Protocol Signed With Iran

LD2612172195 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1549 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — Russia and Iran will sign a protocol on settling mutual financial obligations during the official visit of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Davydov to Iran which began Tuesday, Davydov's press service told Interfax.

Davydov, who is also the Russian minister for foreign economic relations, is visiting Iran on December 26-29.

Unresolved problems regarding mutual financial settlements are inhibiting the development of trade-economic cooperation between Russia and Iran, the press service said.

Tehran's delayed debt to Moscow was $582 million, as of late July 1995, including $380 million to the Rosvooruzheniye state-run defense company and $170 million to the Tekhnoexport foreign trade company.

Iran explains its failure to repay the debts by its tight financial situation and an unsettled Russian debt to Iran of about $195 million, the Department for Asia, Africa and Latin America under the Russian Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations told Interfax.

Moscow and Tehran have already agreed to settle their financial obligations by the mutual reconciliation of debts. Iran will repay the rest of its debt in cash and oil within the next four and a half years, the Russian Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations said.

Iran is an important strategic partner for Moscow as far as machinery and equipment purchases are concerned, experts say. Iran accounts for about 85 percent of Russia's overall export of machinery and equipment. Russia could increase its exports to Iran if Tehran meets its financial obligations, experts say.

Russia mainly exports to Iran equipment of an unspecified nature and equipment for energy facilities. In particular, Russia exported to Iran $104 million worth of military equipment and $333 million worth of equipment and services in 1994.

Should Iran pay for Russian supplies on time, the figures could be much bigger, experts say.

However, the ministry expects Russian exports to Iran to rise to $4 billion or $4.5 billion in the next ten years if the financial situation is favorable.

An-26 Plane Still Being Held in Delhi

LD2712102495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1006 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Leonid Kotov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, December 27 (Itar-Tass) — Reports recently appearing in Russian press about releasing a Russian An-26 plane by Indian authorities, which was forced to land at the New Delhi airport on December 24, turned out to be premature. This plane, belonging to the "Kazanskiy Vertoletnyy Zavod" (Kazan helicopter plant) continues to be kept under guard at a runway siding at the airport, and nine members of its crew are staying in a hotel under watch by Indian intelligence officials.

A formal search of the plane cargo was carried out at the urgent request of the foreign ministry officials together with representatives of the Russian embassy in New Delhi. As was expected, nothing suspicious was uncovered aboard the aircraft, except spare parts and equipment for Mi-27 helicopters, which the plane was carrying from Tatarstan to Kathmandu.

Indian authorities had to agree to the fact that the cargo was fully in conformance with the documents, earlier taken away from the crew. The Russian embassy officials were told that the Indian competent authorities have no complaints against the Russian flying crew and they can resume their flight to Kathmandu. After receiving an official permission for their take off, undergoing a checking of the plane's technical state and refueling, the plane will fly out of the Indian capital today.

For the time being it remains quite unclear whether or not the Indian side has tendered its apologies to the An-

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26 crew, on which its pilots and the Russian diplomats are insisting. The incident involving the Russian plane's forced landing received widespread coverage in India, where it is connected with increased suspiciousness with regard to An-24 type foreign aircraft.

Last week a large consignment of arms was airdropped over India's West Bengal state, by a similar aircraft flown by a Latvian crew. The aircraft, belonging to a privately-owned Hong Kong-based airline, was forced to land by Indian air force fighter aircraft at Bombay, and its air crew was arrested and may have to now face a court trial for its activities.

Russian Ship Under Arrest in Indian Port

LD2712085495 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0635 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Leonid Kotov]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Delhi, 27 Dec — The management of the Far East Shipping Company has refused to pay security for the release of the Mikhail Olminskiy, the Russian ship held under arrest by customs in the Indian port of Kochi. This may protract the settlement of the scandalous incident in which the ship's officers were arrested on charges of smuggling, Viktor Goncharov, director of the consular department of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in India, told ITAR-TASS today. [passage omitted]

Intelligence Service Sees Japan as 'Opponent'

LD2612173095 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1549 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — Russia's foreign intelligence service (SVR) does not rate Japan as an enemy, let alone a hostile state, SVR spokeswoman Tatyana Samolis told Interfax.

Commenting on a controversial report carried by KYODO TSUSHIN news agency about Sunday's news conference by SVR officials, Samolis said formal statements concerning territorial disputes (even if these are part of the wide ranging successful relations in other areas) could evoke a sensitive reaction by political circles and public opinion.

She called for precise conveyance of what was said in respect to sensitive issues in order to avoid any misinterpretation or dramatization.

And she quoted Deputy SVR Chief Vyacheslav Trubnikov as saying on December 24 as follows: "If we speak about opponents, any state which lays, say, territorial claims to Russia, is certainly our opponent. But we try to sort out what lies behind such claims — be it Japan or Estonia, it is all the same to us. But this is our opponent in this question."

As clarification, Samolis said that given the existence of the territorial issue in bilateral relations, Russian intelligence can see Japan as an opponent, that is a state with which Russia is trying to clarify positions in a civilized way.

"But this does in no way put to doubt earlier agreements between our states. At any rate, this is the prerogative of the foreign department," she said.

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Political Issues

Yeltsin Moves From Sanatorium to Country Residence

LD2612150995 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1423 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 26 Dec — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has completed his stay at the sanatorium and at midday transferred to his country residence in the "Barvikha" settlement outside Moscow, where he will continue the course of rehabilitation as prescribed by his doctors, an ITAR-TASS correspondent was told by Sergey Medvedev, the head of state's press secretary. According to him, "Boris Yeltsin's mood and well-being are fine."

Boris Yeltsin will welcome the New Year with his family, the press secretary said.

Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin Discuss Possible Government Reshuffle

LD2612175395 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1741 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 26 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin met on Tuesday to discuss a possible government reshuffle following the communist victory at the State Duma elections.

The presidential press service said the president and the premier "discussed preliminary results of elections to the State Duma and the priorities of the social and economic policy".

"Much attention was paid to the personnel policy, in particular, to possible changes in the composition of the Russian government", the press service said giving no other details.

It said the situation in Chechnya was also discussed.

Yeltsin Will Accept Shakhray's Resignation

LD2712123195 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1103 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 27 (Interfax) — The resignation of Sergey Shakhray from the post of Russian deputy prime minister will be accepted by the president and a decree to this effect is being prepared, a source at the government staff told Interfax Wednesday when commenting on Shakhray's resignation plans.

Shakhray was nominated deputy prime minister by a presidential decree, the source said, which means his resignation can be accepted only by the state leader.

The source made no comments on the possible government reshuffling voiced by the press. "Being a civil servant, I have to rely only on official documents," said the source, adding that such documents have been prepared only for Shakhray.

"There have been no official documents on the resignation of other cabinet members sent to the government staff," said the source.

Resignation Seen as Token Sacrifice

MK2712115195 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 27 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Sergey Parkhomenko under the "Fallout" rubric: "Voluntary-Compulsory Resignations Begin in Government"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Even before the first results of the parliamentary elections became known in the Kremlin, staffers here had taken to quickly uttering, nearly in the same breath, three names, not even divided by commas, but as if by slantlines — Shakhray, Yarov, Zaveryukha.

The three posts of deputy prime minister were meant as compensation for political groups whose factions could form a fairly solid support base for the current government in parliament. Government staffers say that such was the concept of Kremlin strategists. In the Kremlin, however, they say that the exit line was formed by the head of the cabinet himself and his closest advisers.

The most curious thing in these circumstances is that, having resolutely made up their minds as to whom precisely the government is ready to sacrifice to fill the parliament's gluttonous belly, neither the former nor the latter can coherently explain for whom the sacrifices are actually meant. Apart from the greedy and hasty members of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia [LDPR], who would be ready to join the government even as boilermen, nobody seems to have laid particular claim to the posts of the aforementioned deputy prime ministers. What is then the matter?

Well, let us replace Aleksandr Kharlampiyevich [Zaveryukha] with another specialist in the production of environmentally clean beef, who would follow more strictly the Agrarian Party's line. Let's assume that he will play the saw, not the accordion. But there is not much use for the Agrarians in the Duma nowadays.

We may hand the authority of "social sector supervisor" to one of Yekaterina Lakhova's righteous sisters, but what will we get for that from "Women of Russia," who were left outside the parliament?

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It is quite evident that this bone can satisfy neither the Communists nor "Yabloko" members. They could probably be lured by full-blown ministerial posts. Or, if it is a matter of deputy prime ministers, on condition that the powers between the "substantial" deputy government chiefs be seriously reallocated. But the opposition, be it left or right, will not accept such gifts.

It turns out that the upcoming dismissals have no practical sense at all (either tactically or strategically), and if they are made after all, this will be done out of sheer obstinacy — out of a desire to prove one's seriousness of intentions and to demonstrate one's flexibility and readiness for dialogue.

Sergey Shakhray was swift to tender his resignation of his own accord yesterday. Maybe a day or maybe only an hour before he would have been booted out anyway.

It is not known how many times he has already quit the government. At any rate, his own staffers nearly started a quarrel when they were asked to count such occasions by your SEGODNYA correspondent. Finally they agreed that since December 1991, when Sergey Mikhaylovich was first appointed deputy prime minister, it seems that there have already been, let's see, four official resignations. And even if only three, this is an absolute national record for individuals competing in any weight category. As for "unofficial" resignations, that is, those that never materialized (featuring the drawing up of a formal application to resign, a visit to the premier, a heart-to-heart talk, and, finally, a grudging agreement "to persevere for some more time"), they are clearly uncountable.

Don't be upset. We are not parting with him for long. This is a token sacrifice, even though the resignation is for real.

Kozyrev 'Remains Russian Foreign Minister'

LD2712103195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1025 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 27 (Itar-Tass) — Andrey Kozyrev remains the Russian Foreign minister so far as the issue of whether he is to resign or keep the job will be considered by President Boris Yeltsin later.

Presidential spokesman Sergey Medvedev told Tass that at the Wednesday Yeltsin-Kozyrev "meeting it was stressed that they will return to the (resignation) issue later".

Earlier the Foreign Minister, who has been elected to the State Duma, said he would consult the President on whether to resign from the post or not. The Russian legislation prohibits to combine a ministerial portfolio with a lawmaker's mandate.

Yeltsin announced his intention to replace Kozyrev yet in October. The President told a news conference then that Kozyrev was unable to coordinate foreign policy issues with other ministries. "My dissatisfaction remains," he said.

On Tuesday Yeltsin decreed to create the Foreign Policy Council under the Russian President "for purposes of improving the effectiveness of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation and the exercise of powers of the President of the Russian Federation in determining the guidelines of the country's foreign policy."

The council is a coordinating body which is to include the leaders of the Foreign, Defence, Finance and Foreign Economic Relations ministries, the Federal Security Service, the Foreign Intelligence, Federal Border Guard Service and the presidential foreign policy aide.

Zyuganov Says Restoration of USSR 'Inevitable'

AU2712125095 Sofia TRUD in Bulgarian 21 Dec 95 p 9

[Interview with Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, by Dimitrina Gergova; place and date not given; "Restoration of USSR Is Inevitable"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gergova] Gennadiy Andreyevich, the final results of the elections have not been published yet, but your Communist Party obviously won Russia's parliamentary elections. Do you think that the new distribution of power in the Duma will direct the country's political life in a different direction?

[Zyuganov] If the crew of a major vessel consists of prudent people, they know that the helm should not be turned sharply, because the ship could overturn. Our crew in parliament will conduct a measured and balanced policy. Our task is to work for the people and ensure them normal conditions for working and living, so that they will stop getting drunk and stealing. All those engaged in production — regardless whether state or private — must be secure and calm. We are not against private property, but for the correct distribution of all property.

It is necessary to restore the citizens' social rights. There are currently more than 20 million unemployed. The pensioners have practically been robbed of their rights and they are living in poverty. In the past the teachers, physicians, and journalists, for example, were not especially rich, but they were secure. Now

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5 percent of them have become fabulously rich and turned right, while the rest have become a lumpen proletariat and turned left. How is it possible that a professor at Moscow University receives $50, and an defense industry engineer — $20 dollar per month? Russia practically remains without a political center.

Our second task is to create a broad coalition that could support our candidate in the presidential elections.

[Gergova] With whom will you cooperate in this enterprise?

[Zyuganov] With the agrarians, the trade unions, the organizations of veterans and women, and the creative unions. All of them — one way or another — are represented in the Duma. We have already formed such unions in many places. It is important for us that the Duma adopt laws that will serve to benefit the people, rather than laws that do not help our society. We need a dictatorship of the law, which should be mandatory for every citizen and for the president alike. Now we have a dictatorship of anarchy, bureaucracy, the Mafia, and chaos. We proposed already in the previous Duma to amend the Constitution in order to curb the absolute rule of the president and his circle. We will continue to insist on this.

[Gergova] What prevents coexistence between yourself and the president and Chernomyrdin's cabinet?

[Zyuganov] The course of the cabinet, which was initiated by Yegor Gaydar — incidentally, his party has not yet crossed the 5 percent threshold — suffered a total fiasco. After three years of Chernomyrdin's cabinet his party won only 9.7 percent. What does all this mean? It means that the people do not believe him. No cabinet in the world can remain in power after such a result. It simply must go. In those three years Chernomyrdin did not even get rid of people such as Kozyrev and Chubays. In any event, it will be necessary to strengthen the composition of the executive power. In short — at present Russia does not have a serious cabinet.

[Gergova] How realistic is the restoration of the USSR? On what former union republics do you rely?

[Zyuganov] The gradual restoration of the USSR is inevitable. The first stage involves restoring all links, without encroaching on the political sovereignty of states such as Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.

The second stage will begin when all the rest see that this is a serious undertaking. Then many small states will join. I am even convinced that the new formation will be much broader than the former USSR.

The policy of division and disunity is abnormal. Look what is happening in the West. They are uniting and introducing a uniform currency, while we are doing the opposite — we are going in opposite directions. Such a policy on the eve of the third millennium has no future.

[Gergova] Do you have any contacts with Bulgaria?

[Zyuganov] I take this opportunity to thank our Bulgarian friends through your newspaper for their greetings. I have best memories of your country. We had especially friendly relations with Razgrad Okrug, which was a fraternal okrug when I worked in Orel. I have many contacts in Bulgaria and have met many members of your government. I want to address best wishes to all Bulgarians with the hope that good relations will develop between our countries.

Communists Do Not Intend To Enter Present Government

LD2612215795 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1310 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Zhukov]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Moscow, 26 Dec — The Communists do not intend to enter the present government, but do not rule out the possibility of cooperating with it, if it changes its course, said Gennadiy Seleznev, one of the leaders of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, today.

"We do not intend to share responsibility with the present cabinet of ministers for what is happening in the country," Gennadiy Seleznev stated in a conversation with the ITAR-TASS correspondent. "However, if Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin makes concessions to society and ceases conducting what we consider to be a ruinous course, we do not rule out the possibility of cooperating with it." [passage omitted]

Speaking about the Communists' position regarding the formation of the managing bodies of the newly elected State Duma, Gennadiy Seleznev said that at present consultations were being held with the leaders of the electoral associations that got into the Duma and that before the first meeting of the lower house of parliament, judging by everything, the decision will be made. Most likely, the final decision will be made by the Communist Party leadership at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation on 11 January, he said.

Chernomyrdin Says 'Our Home' Will Support Yeltsin

LD2612164995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1549 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 26 (Interfax) — The political goal of the movement Our Home Is

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Russia (NDR) in the new Duma is to support the president and the government and ensure reformist draft laws are adopted, the NDR leader, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told a meeting of NDR deputies in a Moscow region sanatorium Tuesday.

The meeting attended by over 70 deputies elected by both party tickets and single-mandate constituencies discussed forming an NDR faction and its tactics before the first session of the new State Duma.

"There is no hopelessness and irreversibility and certainly no big surprise in the election results," Chernomyrdin said. "The new Duma will be more predictable; it is obvious that four to five major factions will be formed within it," he added.

Chernomyrdin categorically dismissed any attempts to discredit everything that has been done as well as any talks of an election defeat. "On the whole, the elections quite evidently showed the solid potential for stability that Russia already has. This means that all conditions for continuing the course towards a full-fledged market economy and democratic transformation of the country still remain," he stated.

At the same time, Chernomyrdin named "too much self-confidence, squandering, inefficient use of funds, personnel mistakes including the selection of candidates, and poor work with the regions" among the major faults of the NDR election campaign.

Chernomyrdin defined the NDR as a "movement of centrists, reformists and state-minded people." Speaking on its possible allies in the Duma, he said Yabloko is "genetically" close. Many independent deputies may also support the party.

"As for tactics, we must not be narrow-minded dogmatists and tie up our own hands beforehand. There are reasonable, sensible and responsible people in all factions. We will cooperate with them on specific issues," he added.

Chernomyrdin said he did not see "anything criminal in maintaining a working dialogue with the social democratic part of the communist faction."

"If we want stability, order and accord in our society, they must be first in the State Duma. This is not our destiny to rock the parliamentary boat," he underlined.

"We are open for anyone who shares our goals and principles. We will and already are holding talks and consultations with them. At least 20 independent deputies are already preparing to join us," he said.

Chernomyrdin supported having NDR representatives "in the leadership of Duma committees which play a key role in the continuation of the political course of the president and the government." In particular, he named the committees for legislation, budget, social policy, privatization, economic policy, federation and regional affairs, defense, security, agricultural and international issues.

Speaking on the future faction's relations with the government, Chernomyrdin said they "should not be like twin brothers," but must have full understanding on the key, basic issues of strategy and tactics.

After the conference, Chernomyrdin left to meet with President Boris Yeltsin. Presidential Adviser Georgiy Satarov also addressed the conference.

Opposition Wants No Cabinet Changes Before Elections

MK2712065795 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Grigoriy Nekhoroshev: "They Continue To Criticize the Russian Federation Government, But For Winners in Elections It Is Clearly a Disadvantage To Replace It"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Although sociologists predicted a victory for the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] in the parliamentary elections, the voting results got the public conscience a bit too worked up. Society is expecting changes in the power structures with what is almost an unhealthy interest. At the same time, leaders of the winning blocs are coming up with only general gripes against the government and will not mention any specific names. [passage omitted]

Former Deputy Premier Aleksandr Shokhin, one of the "Russia Is Our Home" bloc's leaders, believes that absolutely none of the winning factions in fact stands to gain by pressing now for changing the cabinet by including their own proteges.

Before the June elections it is in no one's interest to answer for anything in particular. It is much better to criticize and demand changes. It is in the interests of the victors to see that no change takes place in the government, in which case all the targets will remain where they are, under a fire of criticism, whereas replacing these targets muddles things.

To Aleksandr Shokhin's mind, all, in the final analysis, will be determined by which line of conduct the president is going to choose for the coming six months. Should this strategy tie up the government with nominating Yeltsin to run in the coming elections, a reshuffle is going to be rather populist. If not, the scenario is going to be absolutely different.

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It is known for certain today that of the two members of the government elected to the new Duma, Sergey Shakhray is ready to surrender his deputy premier's powers. Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, too, has to make a decision. Few people doubt that Kozyrev will resign.

Kozyrev and Shakhray will become sharply opposed to this government, claiming that all that was done in it was done despite their will, predicted Deputy Vladimir Lysenko in a talk with your NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent.

Lysenko also believes that changes in the government will depend on the president's election strategy. If Boris Yeltsin wants to win, he should get rid of Defense Minister Pavel Grachev soon, because without this "he is not going to get support from a considerable part of the population." Vladimir Lysenko believes that, despite the loud-voiced statements of CPRF leaders about the "anti-popular essence" of today's government, it is a disadvantage for the Communists to replace the government: "Their chance to contend for the presidency is linked to criticizing the government. Furthermore, leaving the cabinet as it is, the Communists 'cut off' from running for the presidency such a competitor as Viktor Chernomyrdin."

ITAR-TASS Details Duties of Foreign Policy Council

LD2712115695 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1025 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 27 Dec — The tasks of the Foreign Policy Council under the Russian president are to analyze and forecast the international situation, study public opinion, and draw up proposals to ensure coordinated interaction of the federal bodies of state power. It is being set up "to improve the effectiveness of Russian foreign policy."

As set out in the "Provisions on the Foreign Policy Council under the Russian president" received by ITAR-TASS today, this coordination body will work directly under the head of state's leadership and carry out "preliminary examination and interdepartmental revision of foreign policy issues." The council will prepare proposals and recommendations for the president to determine the fundamentals of Russian foreign policy and to be in charge of it within the remit of the head of state.

The council's membership, confirmed by the president, includes leaders of the Foreign Ministry, Defense Ministry, Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations, the Ministry for Cooperation with CIS Countries, the Finance Ministry, the Federal Security Service, the Foreign Intelligence Service, and the Federal Border Service, as well as the Russian president's foreign policy aide. The council will meet up to twice a month with the participation of the head of state. The council will be convened by the president or on his instruction by the foreign minister.

A secretariat created specially within the president's apparatus will be instructed to ensure the activities of the council. It will be headed by the president's relevant aide. The provision on the secretariat confirmed in a separate decree by the president instructs that body to prepare the council's meetings and the president's decisions on operational foreign policy issues, to monitor their implementation and work between meetings, to consider personnel proposals made by departments and requiring the president's documented approval, to revise drafts of international legal acts and domestic legal acts affecting foreign relations, and to study issues concerning ratification of Russia's international treaties.

Yavlinskiy, Lebed View Main Events of 1995

LD2712105595 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1040 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Tamara Zamyatina and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 27 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian State Duma election and the Bosnian settlement were the most important events in 1995 for Russia and for the whole world, respectively, according to leader of the Yabloko faction Grigoriy Yavlinskiy and retired general Aleksandr Lebed, both recently elected Duma members.

A December poll by the Obshchestvennoye Mneniye (Public Opinion) foundation showed that Yavlinskiy was seventh and Lebed eighth among Russia's key politicians.

Yavlinskiy's respond was laconic — the Duma election, whereas Lebed stated his point of view in detail saying "the Duma election showed the people's sharp disagreement with the government's line. According to preliminary results, the 'party of power' (Our Home Is Russia) won less than 10 percent of votes."

This is why "the course of reform should change to make the economy orientated towards social needs and the government responsible for the people's living standard," Lebed said.

The most important event for the international community was "the war in the former Yugoslavia", according to Yavlinskiy, and "the settlement of the Balkan conflict", in Lebed's words.

"Apart from the sense of satisfaction about the ceasefire in the region", Lebed said he felt "mortified that Russia

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took a secondary role in the process and followed the policies formulated by the U.S. and NATO which clearly pursued their own objects."

"U.S. military bases will remain in the former Yugoslavia for years. Russia, however, was ousted from this strategically important region," he said.

Regional Affairs

Commentary, Reportage on Chechnya Situation

Zavgayev Optimistic About Peace Accord

LD2612135295 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 26 Dec 95

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Doku Zavgayev gave his first news conference as head of the Chechen republic. However, he turned up a little bit later than expected.

While Doku Zavgayev was busy persuading the prime minister to allocate some money from the budget for the reconstruction of the republic, Vyacheslav Mikhaylov came out to meet journalists. We learned that the head of the Ministry for Affairs of Nationalities and Regional policy does subscribe to the view held by the power ministries that the peace talks in Chechnya have no prospects.

[Begin Mikhaylov recording] I think that such talks will be held with everyone who is interested in implementing the military agreements. As for Maskhadov, it is necessary to clarify his position with regard to Gudermes. According to some reports, he was directly involved in this military adventure, to put it bluntly. [end recording]

Zavgayev naturally began his speech by citing the impressive figures of his victory in the elections of the head of government. Allegations by some journalists that there had been violations in the procedure for registering voters were dismissed despite the fact that our colleagues could have easily voted two or three times, just for the fun of it.

[Begin Zavgayev recording] A total of 95 percent of those taking part in the elections voted for the present head of the republic. [end recording

It seems that there were no violations en masse during the elections. People grew tired of the war, Zavgayev said. I am prepared to have talks with anyone for the sake of peace, he said for the umpteenth time.

[Begin Zavgayev recording] If one is to talk about the entire republic, I think that the situation is heading toward peace, toward civic accord. Control has been established over a significant part of the territory. To date, about 200,000 refugees have already returned home. [end recording]

Thus, at present in Chechnya we have the escalation of hostilites, according to representatives of the power ministries, and the return to normal life, according to the head of the republic.

Peace Talks Must Continue 'At All Levels'

LD2612203495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2016 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Sharip Asuyev and Nikolay Zagnoiko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — The peace talks in Chechnya should continue at all levels from the people diplomacy to governments to field commanders to the military command, Vladimir Zorin, the deputy head of the Chechnya-based federal administration, said today.

Speaking on Groznyy's television on Tuesday night, Zorin called for every effort to head off the return to force in handling the Chechnya crisis.

The negotiations broke off after rebels refused to lay down their arms under the July 30 military accord and the federal force did not pull out from Chechnya, which was its part of the accord.

Touching on parties to new negotiations, Zorin said "political issues should be discussed and solved (jointly) with all real political forces". He stressed that ignoring any of these forces would lead to an impasse.

Zorin, who leads the political delegation of the Russian government to the stuck peace talks, said the delegation had had no contacts with Chechen negotiators over the last two weeks.

Chechen Duma Member Calls For Cease-Fire

LD2612131295 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1234 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Nikolay Zagnoyko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — "My principal task as member of the State Duma is to stop the hostilities on the territory of Chechnya," Chechen Military Commissar Major-General Ibrahim Suleymenov said here today during the ceremony of the presentation of parliamentary certificates. He ran for election at the 31st Chechen single-mandate constituency, where he polled more votes than the other five contestants.

"Peace in Chechnya means only one thing — complete disarmament of the bandit gangs, which have lost the

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people's trust after the Gudermes events and are now behaving merely like gangsters, drawing on the services of mercenaries," Suleymenov stated.

The Chechen Military Commissar accused Dudayev's supporters of deliberately destroying their own nation. He said that the Gudermes, Achkhoy-Martan, and Urus-Martan operations were launched by Dudayev's men "according to a single scennario and with the participation of foreign mercenaries".

Suleymenov believes that the collaboration of Dudayev's men with foreign secret services is confirmed by the fact that "they are armed with foreign-made weapons and clad in foreign-made uniforms".

Suleymenov holds that "resolute measures should be taken against those supporters of Dudayev who refuse to embark upon the correct road".

New Hostilities Anticipated

LD2612211995 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2000 GMT 26 Dec 95

[Video report by A. Sladkov; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Gudermes operation is the only military operation currently under way in Chechnya, according to the [federal troops] command. The federal troops are being positioned outside the towns and villages — in tents, in the open fields like this, close to the main highways and communication lines. The documents and luggage of the passing cars are being checked at the roadblocks. This temporary lull seems strange. Everybody — military and civilians — are talking about resumption of the war by the New Year's eve. The inhabitants of Urus-Martan, Shali, and Achkhoy-Martan fear it most. Since the election of the head of the republic and events in Gudermes, everything seems to indicate that the question of who will have the full power in Chechnya is going to be solved not by negotiations, but by war.

[Begin recording] [A. Shkirko, commander of the joint group of troops in Chechnya] Nevertheless, we must spare the populated centers. But should a fire attack originate from a populated center, we will be taking most severe, I might even say brutal measures, to suppress the actions of the armed militants. [passage omitted] [end recording]

With 31 December approaching, people remember not the festivities, but the anniversary of the storming of Groznyy. Everybody — soldiers, armed militants, and civilians — can but try to guess what will the year 1996 bring to the Chechen land.

Officials Persuade Dudayevites To Leave Shali

LD2712110295 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1000 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] With the help of Chechen elders and representatives of the Chechen government and Supreme Soviet, the local authorities have managed to persuade Dudayev's supporters in Shali not to make any moves that could lead to the development of a Gudermes-type situation. ITAR-TASS was told this today by Shali Mayor (Musa Dokayev). In particular, he said the militants have promised not to seize administration buildings. The mayor said the official powers are in full control of the situation in the town.

On Tuesday, as has already been reported, illegal armed formations started to retreat from Achkhoy-Martan. Earlier, thanks to the active efforts of the administration and the local population, the Dudayevites were forced to leave practically all the facilities they held in Shatoy, Urus-Martan, and Avtury.

'Rebels' Withdraw From Achkhoy-Martan

LD2612132095 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1304 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Nikolay Zagnoyko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — Chechen rebels on Tuesday started leaving the town of Achkhoy-Martan which they seized earlier this month.

Sanaki Arbiyev, vice-premier of the Moscow-backed government, told Itar-Tass that the agreement on militants' withdrawal had been reached at the negotiations between field commanders and local officials supported by elders.

"The policy towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict, towards an inter-Chechen dialogue is a strategic objective of the republic's government," Arbiyev said.

Earlier, rebels had to abandon practically all key settlements situated from 20 to 50 kilometres off the Chechen capital, such as Shatoi, Voviye Atagi, Avtury and Urus-Martan.

In the town of Shali, talks between rebels and local administration are still in progress, he added.

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Police Break Up Demonstration by Unpaid Workers

MM2612140495 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 23 Dec 95 p 1

["Own Information" report: "Hungry People Lying on the Rails"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As we have already reported, inhabitants of the settlement of Vyshkov in Bryansk Oblast's Zlynskovskiy Rayon blocked the main railroad line for two hours.

The details of this action have become known. Despite official claims that about 100 people took part in the action, it transpires that the line was blocked by around 500 Vyshkov residents, for the most part workers from the "Revput" match factory, who have not been paid since June. The police used rubber nightsticks to disperse them. Several people turned up at the local hospital suffering from head and arm injuries. Among those injured were four women, including a pensioner.

On Moscow's markets a box of "Revput" matches costs 500 rubles. Yet the workers are left without their wages.

Operation Launched Against Illegal Immigrants

LD2612153695 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1442 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Eduard Popov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIVOSTOK, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — A large-scale "Foreigner" operation has been launched in the Maritime Territory (the Russian Far East). It is intended to oust from this area all the foreigners, who are illegally staying there at present. Itar-Tass was told by officials of the Press Service of the Maritime Territorial Interior Department that most resolute measures were being taken against Chinese citizens, who had illegally made their way into the Territory for various business purposes.

Police statistics show that almost all the crimes, committed in the territory against foreigners, were directed against Chinese citizens. Lagging far behind them in this respect are Koreans, Vietnamese, citizens of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other foreigners. This is explained by the fact that Chinese account for 80 per cent of all the foreigners coming to the Russian Maritime Territory. About 45 thousand of them were registered there this year alone.

Moreover, Russian laws are being violated in the Maritime Territory also by foreigners from the CIS and other countries. These violations include expired visas, failure to observe registration rules, forged documents or complete absence of identification papers. There were also inter-ethnic conflicts.

All the police forces of the region were mobilised to carry out the "Foreigner" operation in areas bordering on China in order to apprehend border violators. The local passport and visa services are ready to receive all the illegal migrants in order to help them return to their countries by legal means, the Press Service of the Maritime Territorial Interior Department reports.

Samoylov Cited on Communist Governors

MK2712115295 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 27 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Yelena Tregubova: "Former Governors Lose to Communists in Novosibirsk and Tambov. President's Staff Looks in Advance for Ways To Rein in People's Choices"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow analysts continue to discuss the unexpected victory of Communist Party proteges over the former heads of administration in the gubernatorial elections in Novosibirsk and Tambov Oblasts.

Sergey Samoylov, head of the presidential administration for work with territories, stressed in talking with your SEGODNYA correspondent that, of the 12 regions where the president permitted elections in December, the heads of administration in two oblasts were unable to win precisely in those two oblasts where a second round of voting was held. "The second round was held after the parliamentary elections against the backdrop of massive propaganda of a 'red breakthrough' in all central and local mass media outlets," states Sergey Samoylov. "The Communist electorate, which already was the most disciplined of all, was now doubly mobilized by a euphoric mood." At the same time, the voters who cast their ballots in the 17 December Duma elections for the continuation of reforms "simply lost heart after hearing the results and they did not go to the polls in the second round of the gubernatorial elections." Whereas about 70 percent of citizens came to the polling stations in Novosibirsk and Tambov on 17 December, as little as 40 percent of the voters wished to cast their ballots in the second round of the gubernatorial elections.

Assessing the possible consequences of the change of leaders in Novosibirsk and Tambov, people in the president's staff advise "waiting and seeing if the proteges of the Communists start carrying into effect their party's program in one individual region." "The new governors Vitaliy Mukha and Aleksandr Ryabov are supposed to realize that should they try to carry out anti-reformer revenge in their individual regions, they are not going to have any constructive cooperation with the federal center, and the population of these oblasts will soon realize that the Communists are not going to

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bring them any good," Sergey Samoylov pointed out. Presidential staff representatives cautioned that should the Communist governors sabotage current federal laws, the president will use "all the legal levers of influence available to him — including appealing against illegal actions of regional leaders in the Constitutional Court, something that, if crude violations have been found, could lead to the removal from office of even elected governors."

Leak Repair Begins on Ukhta-Yaroslavl Oil Pipeline

LD2612160495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1457 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Viktor Makarov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Emba, Komi Republic December 26 (Itar- Tass) — The Ukhta-Yaroslavl trunk pipeline, which has a diameter of 800 millimetres, had to be switched of due to an oil leak. Urgent repair works are now under way in Knyazhpogosky District of the Komi Republic.

Itar-Tass learned today that controllers of the Association of Northern Oil Pipelines noticed on the night of December 24 that pressure had dropped sharply in the part of the pipeline extending beyond the city of Ukhta. The pumping of oil was urgently stopped. Helicopters were used to spot the oil leak. It was found 110 kilometres from Ukhta. The damaged section of the pipeline was switched off by special devices and the leak was stopped.

The accident occurred on the surface stretch of the pipeline spanning the Ropcha River. The pipeline there runs through a large- diameter protective tube built across the river. It saved the Ropcha River from pollution. According to unofficial information, the oil leaked into the protective tube and spilled out of it onto the river bank. True, some of the oil got splashed over the river ice. No information was given on the amount of the spilt oil, the causes and type of accident.

Work is now in full swing to replace the damaged stretch of the pipeline, which is approximately fifty metres long. The faulty pipes are being disassembled and new ones are being welded together. Cleaning up operations are also under way. About one hundred men and all the necessary equipment are now working on the spot of the accident. Experts say that the repair jobs will take one or two days more. All the consequences of the accident will be liquidated within two or three weeks.

Oil Pipeline Damaged Near Chelyabinsk

LD2712092795 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0905 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Yevgeniy Tkachenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] CHELYABINSK, Southern Urals, December 27 (Itar-Tass) — Managers of a district oil pipeline administration in the Chelyabinsk Region did not notify for four days the local committee for emergencies about a leakage of oil from a pipeline near Chelyabinsk. They tried to conceal an oil "lake" which formed as a result of a damage of the pipeline.

However, their efforts were in vain: local environmentalists spotted spilled oil. According to the Vechernyy Chelyabinsk newspaper, a bulldozer rammed a 700-mm pipeline during repair work on the Tuymazy-Novosibirsk pipeline in Krasnoarmeyskiy district.

The damage was removed the next day. In the meantime, 100-150 tonnes of oil leaked at the place of the pipeline rupture over an area of 3,000 square meters.

It is impossible to burn it up due to the proximity of the pipeline. It is also impossible to pump it up back into the pipeline due to low temperatures and the recent snowfall.

An administrative commission which will meet on Thursday, is to decide how to remove consequences of the breakdown. The management of the pipeline administration will evidently have to pay a fine of 50 million roubles for violating environmental control legislation.

Economic Issues

Chernomyrdin, Finance Officials Discuss Fiscal Year

LD2612140395 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1349 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Artyom Protasenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin, who returned from a visit to Orenburg Region on Monday, has discussed with leaders of the Finance Ministry and Central Bank the preliminary results of the 1995 fiscal year. The meeting was attended by First Vice-Premier Anatoliy Chubays, Finance Minister Vladimir Panskov, Central Bank Chairman Sergey Dubinin, and First Deputy Finance Minister Vladimir Petrov.

Panskov told Itar-Tass that preliminary figures have shown that there would be no serious deviations from

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the planned figures of the 1995 federal budget. However, he pointed out that the official results of the fiscal year would be published only in mid-January.

Defense Industry Committee Optimistic About 1995

MK2712080095 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Anna Sukhobok under the "State Industry Committee Sums Up Results of 1995" rubric: "Ninety Minutes of Optimism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday's news conference by the leadership of the State Defense Industry Committee showed that the image of a crumbling post-Soviet military-industrial complex that has taken shape in the public consciousness is not that accurate. Perhaps this is the subjective view of your KOMMERSANT-DAILY correspondent, who visited the committee's building on Miusskaya Square in anticipation of the convulsions of failed departmental lobbyism, but all signs at the news conference indicated that the State Defense Industry Committee is entering 1996 with a sense of optimism.

Throughout his 90-minute statement, committee chairman Viktor Glukhikh was animated and even allowed himself to make jokes: "Formerly, you journalists called us an all-devouring monster — and now, a national heritage. Good guys, now you are reconstructed!" Journalists, about 30-40 of whom were gathered at the conference hall of the former Ministry of Medium Machine Building, did not argue with him. Accustomed to taking up any sentiments gaining currency in society and betting on the favorites, they, as their oldest profession requires them, promptly sensed the historic moment of replacing the frightening image of the Soviet military machine with a rosy picture of the Russian defense industry under restructuring. A case in point in this regard is Kipras Mazheyka, the unchanging correspondent of Russian Television and Radio in the Benelux countries, who used to write about NATO's aggressiveness, then — just as consistently — about the North Atlantic Alliance's peaceloving nature. Yesterday, along with seven other winners, he was awarded the State Defense Industry Committee's diploma for covering problems of the Russian military-industrial sector and glorifying Russian arms.

These awards marked an end to the news conference, which, fully in accordance with recommendations of public relations specialists, ended at a high emotional pitch reinforcing the favorable impression of the event in its participants' subconscious. Meanwhile, summing up the results of the industry's performance in 1995, Viktor Glukhikh cited figures pointing to a continuing crisis, rather than to an economic recovery. On the whole, industrial production fell by 15.8 percent compared to last year's level, including by 31.7 percent with regard to civilian production. Viktor Glukhikh pointed out a production slump in the communications, weapons, radio, and electronic industries. In the military-industrial sector, shipbuilding was probably the sole industry that is ending the year fairly successfully, the growth in its production volumes reaching 141.4 percent.

As should be expected, the State Defense Industry Committee chairman attributed the critical situation at defense industry enterprises to insufficient state funding. Instead of the planned 1.4 trillion rubles, the defense industry has received 260 billion. According to Viktor Glukhikh, gaps could be bridged only thanks to commercial banks. Another reason for the slump — the reduction in state defense orders (by more than six-fold over four years) — was not a revelation either.

If anything can instill optimism in those sympathizing with the domestic military-industrial sector, this is the stable export of military-technological production: Foreign orders exceed those of the Defense Ministry by three times. The committee chairman said that he does not see anything terrible in the fact that "our enterprises are rearming other states' armies — this emphasizes yet again the high level of domestic military technologies." Yet the dynamics of exporting civilian products by defense industry enterprises hold even greater interest. While in 1994 they delivered $440 million worth of technology, in 1995 the figure rose to $630 million. This came as a genuine surprise to those who have not yet forgotten the methods used by First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets in order to make sure that the much-invoked "MiG's for palm oil" contract with Malaysia is complied with. It is quite possible, however, that the less technology-intensive civilian production does not require intervention at the level of the government's second in command.

Viktor Glukhikh's main concern is the attempt by Western investors to penetrate the Russian military-industrial sector: "The national heritage should not be made international." He sees it as a particular victory that the Arsenyevsk and Ulan-Ude aviation plants and the Sukhoy Design Bureau were removed from the list of enterprises to be put on the block in loans-for-shares auctions.

As is his want, Viktor Glukhikh finished his speech with rousing stories about a new operational-tactical missile and a submarine. Having relaxed his former vigilance, Glukhikh was about to tell the audience about the submarine in greater detail, but at the very last

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moment one of his deputies pulled him up short — and the state secret was not divulged.

Budget Passage Said To Eclipse Vote Results

MK2712085695 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 8

[Report by Roman Artemyev: "Dura Lex Sed Lex"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although the results of the 17 December elections and forecasts regarding their consequences have been the focus of public attention throughout last week, in fact the summing up of the results was far from the most important event of the past seven days. Against the backdrop of discussions about the influence of the left, which achieved a relative victory, on the Sixth State Duma, the fact that the Federation Council approved the law on the 1996 budget went largely unnoticed by the Russian public. It should have known better, because for the national economy the adoption of a budget is tantamount to parliamentary elections in the political world.

To be more precise, given the current constitutional regime, the budget is in fact much more important for Russia than elections for the lower chamber of its federal legislature. As long as the state is headed by a person determined to make sure that the adopted law is complied with, the opposition will need at least two-thirds of State Duma seats, not just an absolute majority, in order to bloc its implementation and to have it revised. Precisely this number of seats will be required under Article 107 of the Constitution in order to be able to override a presidential veto (for instance, on the Law on Making Amendments and Additions to the Law of the Russian Federation "On the Federal Budget for 1996," which may hypothetically be submitted by the opposition). But even after gaining such a solid majority in the State Duma, the success of the opposition factions in such an undertaking is far from assured, because the new Federation Council is unlikely to back the Duma by a two-thirds vote, as the Constitution requires. Formed according to the principle of representing the executive and legislative branches of power of Federation components, with regard to matters of budget policy the Federation Council will a priori lean toward the stance of the federal government and the president. For this reason, in order to dictate its laws to the country, the opposition will have to drum up an unprecedentedly wide coalition in the Duma so as to assure two-thirds of the overall number of Federal Assembly seats (at least 430), as provided for in that same Article 107 of the Fundamental Law. Even in the impossible event that the "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] faction finds itself one on one against the rest of the chamber, the opposition will not muster the requisite number of votes all the same.

Hence, only one conclusion can be drawn, namely, the most important economic law that lays the foundation of economic policy cannot be revised without the consent of the head of state at least over the first six months of the coming year. What follows from this?

It follows from this that the outlines of the government's economic policy at least for the upcoming six months are clearly defined, and only precipitously degenerating Western Kremlinologists and outsiders of domestic business, who have paid dearly for their lighthearted attitude to the law on the 1995 federal budget, can accuse the Russian authorities of being unpredictable and unfathomable. Indeed, it is hard to believe for an ordinary Russian what huge sums could have been saved and how many financial structures would not have had one foot in the grave had Russian business given more thought to the government's March statements about its economic policy for this year. It was precisely nine months ago that its fundamental provisions were not only definitively formulated, but also made public: On 8 March the government and the Central Bank issued a joint statement on economic policy in 1995, and on 22 March the Federation Council approved the Law on the Federal Budget. The moderately austere financial policy and the obligation to pay off the budget deficit mostly from non-inflationary sources that were set forth in the budget marked an end not only to the era of cheap money, but also to the model of business activity characteristic of an inflationary economy. Predictions by experts and analysts that the possibility provided in Article 1 of the Law on the 1995 Federal Budget, under which the Central Bank may give loans to the government of up to 5 trillion rubles [R] to bridge gaps between the receipt of revenues and planned expenditures that may emerge during the year, will be interpreted by the financial authorities as broadly as possible and become a loophole for the creation of credits by the Central Bank, did not come true. The government reached the borrowing limit as early as the first quarter, and later did not attempt to convince itself or financial organizations that the R5 trillion figure should be understood to mean a one-time borrowing limit, not the absolute annual ceiling.

This meant that the government is placing emphasis on borrowing money on the domestic financial market, where the securities it issues inevitably have to compete with other financial instruments. There can be no fair competition with the state anywhere at any time, so it was only natural that the government and the Central Bank took measures to quash demand on the financial markets that diverted available financial

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resources from short-term treasury bonds and, later, government savings bonds, which have become the world's most profitable financial instrument.

The imposition of this budget strategy on the desire to quash the key inflation factors brought about a situation where, first, the currency market was fully robbed of its speculative attractiveness (by tightening reserve requirements for commercial banks in April and then by introducing a currency corridor in July), after which the market for interbank loans, too, fell in August.

Naturally, commercial banks were the first and foremost to fall victim to this policy — particularly those of them that relied on operations on high-yield and high-risk markets. Afterward it was the turn of exporters, however, who proved to be for the most part unprepared for competition in conditions of a stable ruble, and natural monopolies, the prices for whose products were frozen last autumn until 1 January. While generally achieving its financial policy objectives (according to preliminary results, the average inflation rate will be 7.4-7.5 percent a month and about 200 percent a year in 1995), the government forced Russian business to get down to a serious restructuring of its management, orienting it toward lower production costs in conditions of increasingly fierce price competition. A considerable share of banks and enterprises turned out to be unprepared for tackling this problem — among other reasons, because they, as usual, thought government forecasts to be unrealistic. One of the most important results of 1995, however, was the fact that the Russian economy turned out to be much more manageable — and the force of market elements, much weaker — than initially thought. One consequence of the unexpected discovery was the awakening of a love for the state on the part of the most successful representatives of Russian business, all the more so because the state's overall role in the economy has abruptly increased this year.

One may rest assured that this feeling will be reinforced next year, first of all because the budget policy in 1996 will continue both in general and in particular the 1995 line. Moreover, such inflationary indicators as the average monthly inflation rate (projected to drop from 5-7 percent in 1995 to 1.9 in 1996) and the size of the budget deficit will be tightened. The latter, despite its absolute growth by more than R13 trillion (from R73 to 88.5 trillion) will shrink as a percentage of GDP to 3.85 percent (in March 1995, the deficit cap was set at 4.58 percent). Curiously, the 1996 budget law marked the first time that the relative size of the budget deficit was expressed as a percentage of GDP, as most countries do, not of budget expenditures, as in 1995 (the final figure being 21.7 percent). By the way, even with regard to this quasi-Soviet indicator, the 1996 budget will look more favorable: The ratio of the budget deficit and budget expenditures is 20.5 percent. All this put together confirms that hopes for the softening of financial policy still cherished by certain elements of Russian business are mostly groundless. As was the case this year, the government will rely on borrowings made on both the domestic and international financial markets, which envisions in advance compliance with its monetary program obligations. Otherwise, it would be effectively impossible to obtain financial resources from the IMF, which will for the most part be spent to pay off the R32.4-trillion budget deficit. Therefore, the state has no other option but to use all its available might to increase the attractiveness of its debt obligations, while, according to Central Bank Chairman Sergey Dubinin's recent statement, gradually reducing their yield.

The role of the state in the coming year will also increase, because at this stage of institutional reform in the Russian economy the government has unequivocally placed emphasis on setting up highly diversified financial-industrial groups, which cannot be done in principle without active government intervention. One method of such intervention is security-based auctions, which have genuinely become the event of the year and a purely Russian contribution to the practice and theory of the "transition period." The final results of the auctions will become clear only after 1 September, when the period during which under the presidential edict state-held blocs of shares that have been pledged as security may be redeemed by repaying bank loans, expires. At a time of investment crisis, which has only been exacerbated by the state's active intervention on the capital market as the largest borrower, reliance on industrial conglomerates headed by investment banks turns out to be the only possible government strategy. Only such financial-industrial groups will finally be able to accumulate the requisite investment and attract foreign capital, while keeping up state intervention on a considerable scale.

Reliance on financial-industrial conglomerates is also attributable to the purely political need to form the requisite social support basis by the upcoming presidential elections to prop up the current head of state. Precisely such structures can assure Boris Yeltsin or his handpicked successor an information edge in the mass media, which is increasingly coming under the influence of the financial groups standing closest to the government. This partly explains the government's stubborn desire to turn the most efficient chunks of state property to a strictly defined range of banks through security auctions. It is they that are intended to become the mainstay of the current regime during the upcoming presidential race. In response, the government and the president hear

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as a kind of watchword: "The state is above the law!" which per se is a graphic illustration of the role this part of the business community is assigning to state institutions in Russia's future economic and political life. Against this background, the results of the parliamentary elections begin to look like a mere large-scale public opinion survey, which has made it possible to define an electoral strategy and the presidential election campaign's tactics as accurately as possible.

These are the conclusions that can be drawn upon carefully reading the Law on the Federal Budget for 1996, which was placed on the desk of the Russian head of state last week. Let us hope, however, that upon signing the law the president will not be guided by the "state-is-above-the-law" formula when it comes down to implementing it.

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International Affairs

Kiev Wants To Expand Links With NATO, WEU

LD2612181495 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1545 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Ukraine wants to extend cooperation with NATO and the Western European Union [WEU] and will continue to develop cooperation with European and Transatlantic organizations, Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Hennadiy Udovenko told UNIAN on 26 December.

He stressed, however: "Ukraine as a non-bloc nation is worried about its national security, as it may end up between an expanded NATO and the Tashkent alliance."

According to the minister, Ukraine has no intention to join either NATO or the Tashkent bloc, but will not limit its cooperation with NATO to an individual program within Partnership for Peace. "NATO, too, has expressed an interest in cooperating with Ukraine," he added.

Udovenko Praises International Policies

LD2612181995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1629 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, December 26 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Building up Ukraine's international image is the highest achievement of her foreign policy in the outgoing year, Hennadiy Udovenko, Ukrainian Foreign Minister, told a press-conference on Tuesday in Kyiv.

"Ukraine has proved to be a state pursuing stable and predictable policy, which wishes to play and plays a significant role in European and international affairs", the Minister said.

H.Udovenko believes that if Ukraine "succeeds in overcoming economic problems, our state will become a really influential one and will gain broader opportunities for her activities in the international arena".

He noted that Ukraine will further participate in the Commonwealth of Independent States but she did not intend to support decisions which "lead to the creation of the supranational structures".

The Minister noted that Ukraine had improved relations with the G-7 member countries in the outgoing year. He reminded that President Kuchma had paid six visits to the G-7 countries.

L.Kuchma invited French President Jacques Chirac to visit Ukraine in 1996, H.Udovenko said. According to him, a similar invitation has been received from the French side. "Thus, the exeptionally important period in our activities - that of the development of relations with the G-7 member countries - will be completed", the Minister said.

The Minister evaluated the development of relations between Ukraine, Russia and the CIS member countries as the second important trend of Ukraine's foreign policy. "Placing the Ukrainian-Russian dialogue at the normal, practical level - is one of the most important achievements of the Ukrainian foreign policy in 1995", he said.

H.Udovenko noted Ukraine's participation in numerous international events in 1996. He evaluated Ukraine's accession to the Council of Europe [CE] as "a resolute breakthrough into the common democratic space of united Europe".

At the same time H.Udovenko stressed that the accession to the CE "demands from us resolute actions to bring our legislation in line with the standards of that organization". An inter-departmental body, chaired by the Justice Minister, is to be established to coordinate this work, he said.

H.Udovenko evaluated the adoption of the principled decision on Ukraine's admission to the Central European Initiative as " a matter of no less importance". The final membership of Ukraine in this organization is to be formalized in March.

H.Udovenko said that the invitation to attend the recent conference of the European Council and the Mediterranean countries in Barcelona, which was delivered to Ukraine, "is a de facto recognition of Ukraine by the European Union as a Mediterranean state."

The Minister stressed that Ukraine pays special attention to the development of relations with the Ukrainian diaspora. According to him, Ukraine places this issue at the level of intergovernmental relations with the CIS member countries, in particular with Russia.

Speaking about plans of the Ukrainian diplomacy in 1996, H.Udovenko stressed that Ukraine "will broaden the geography of her relations with various countries on the basis of pragmatism".

In his words, Ukraine will continue her activity in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. President Kuchma is to go on an official visit to Indonesia.

Kuchma Backs Shevardnadze Solution for Abkhazia Conflict

LD2612173795 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1550 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev, 26 Dec — Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma who met Georgia's Deputy

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Minister of Foreign Affairs Malkhaz Kakabadze today backed the Georgian government's position regarding the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

According to Ukraine's Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko, who attended the meeting, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze is proposing to establish a federal republic of Georgia with Abkhazia as its integral part having an autonomous status.

The bilateral meeting comes ahead of a CIS summit due to be held on 19 January in Moscow, where the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict will be discussed. Earlier, Ukraine offered to be an observer in the peacekeeping operation, but "the warring side expressed no interest in the proposal," keeping the Russian troops as sole peacekeepers, Udovenko said. The foreign minister added there was little improvement in the region despite 11 UN Security Council resolutions.

The Ukrainian officials and the Georgian deputy foreign minister discussed the future of the CIS and expressed a mutual desire to improve its efficiency. Both sides exchanged views on the consequences of a possible denunciation of the Belavezha accords urged by the Russian Communists.

Minister Optimistic on Relations With Romania

LD2612182995 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1215 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is arranging a meeting between the prime ministers of Ukraine and Romania, in a bid to boost a troubled relationship. Speaking at a news conference on 26 December, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko stressed that the absence of a political treaty with Romania did not prevent the two countries from developing trade or economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation.

The absence of a treaty was no obstacle to the development of interstate relations, the foreign minister added.

National Affairs

Socialist Split Threatens Parliament Speaker

WS2712090795 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0513 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Oksana Hasyuk, INTELNEWS Staff Writer]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Dec 26 — Parliament Speaker Oleksandr Moroz's job is being threatened by a split in the leadership of the Socialist Party, which he heads.

The dispute arose over the weekend, when party Executive Council members Volodymyr Marchenko and Natalya Vitrenko failed to get the party's Political Council to support a resolution condemning Moroz and Socialist parliamentary faction leader Ivan Chyzh.

The two dissidents were mad at Moroz for signing a Constitutional Agreement between Parliament and the president in June. The deal gave President Leonid Kuchma sweeping new powers, including the ability to form a new government without parliamentary approval.

Vitrenko, who was a key economic adviser and supporter of Moroz when she entered Parliament in February, also criticized the speaker for what she said was his disregard of a party resolution vowing to oppose Kuchma's economic reforms.

The two suffered defeat on Saturday, when the regional and ward leaders making up the party's Political Council rejected their resolution, and ordered them ejected from the Executive Council, the inner circle that controls most party functions.

Although Marchenko and Vitrenko are still members of the larger Political Council and say they plan to remain party members for the time being, the two have announced plans to form their own parliamentary group. It is not clear how many others in the 18-member Socialist contingent will join them.

Petro Zolotarenko, chairman of the party's organizational division, called on Marchenko and Vitrenko to resign from the party in the event that they go through with their plans.

He predicted, however, that the two dissidents would return to the fold and that the Political Council decision would not lead to a permanent split in the party.

Seven New Supreme Council Deputies Listed

LD2612190295 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in Ukrainian 1700 GMT 26 Dec 95

[no video available]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ukrainian Central Electoral Commission today confirmed the election of the following seven Supreme Council deputies in the 10 December by-election:

Ishchenko, Oleh Ivanovych: chairman of the Ukrainian-Russian Oil Company corporation, Pershotravnevyy No 432 constituency, Chernovtsy Region;

Kyrylenko, Ivan Hryhorovych: first deputy chairman of the Dnepropetrovsk regional council, Pavlograd town No 96 constituency, Dnepropetrovsk Region;

Marchuk, Yevhen Kyrylovych: prime minister of Ukraine, Mirgorodskiy No 324 constituency, Poltava Region;

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Slavov, Mykola Antonovych: president of the Ukrrichflot joint-stock shipping company, Podolskiy No 13 constituency, Kiev;

Franchuk, Anatoliy Romanovych: ex-prime minister of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Kerchenskiy No 31 constituency, Crimea;

Franchuk, Ihor Anatolyevych: director-general of the Ukrainian Fuel and Energy Resources center joint-stock company, Yaltinskiy No 35 constituency, Crimea;

Shevchenko, Heorhiy Vasylyovych: sea navigator, head of the organizing department at the Sevastopol city committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party.

Minister Dissatisfied With Law Enforcement

LD2612184595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1629 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, December 26 (Interfax - Ukraine) — No "qualitative progress" have been observed in the day-to-day performance of Ukraine's law enforcement bodies in 1995, Interior Minister Yuriy Kravchenko said.

Yu.Kravchenko was addressing a meeting in Kiev today of the Interior Ministry's collegium on the results of the outgoing year. One can yet see "formalism and irresponsibility" in the performance of the police, Yu.Kravchenko noted.

The Minister described as an "objective cause behind that" the "overload" of investigation officers. In his words, one investigator concurrently deals with 66 cases on an average, which is two-fold up on science-based standards.

The "street offence" rate has declined 5.6 per cent, the Minister said, yet the re-offence rate has risen by 5.2 per cent and the rate of theft of private and state-owned property — by 14 per cent.

Two and a half thousand pieces of fire arms have been confiscated from criminals in 1995, including 155 submachine guns and 8 machine-guns.

A total of thirteen murders, 24 cases of serious bodily injuries, 14 cases of brigandage, 84 of burglary, 920 thefts (40 car thefts including) are daily registered in Ukraine, according to the Minister.

Cases of relations among servicemen running against the regulations are still registered in the Interior Troops, Kravchenko indicated. Thus, in 1995, three servicemen have been killed as a result of such relations, 87 persons have received grave bodily injuries. A total of 195 soldiers have deserted from their regiments, the Minister added.

Defense Firms Told To Seek Orders 'Elsewhere'

WS2712101795 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0800 GMT 27 Dec 95

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As reported by UKRINFORM's defense correspondent, a joint meeting of senior officials from the Ukrainian Defense Ministry and leaders of repair factories and defense industry trade unions has taken place in Shepetivka, Khmelnytskyy Oblast. The meeting was convened to discuss and reach a general sectoral agreement for 1996 between the defense ministry and trade unions. According to reports from the press service of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, 50 industrial enterprises are currently operating under the Defense Ministry. Due to insufficient budgetary funds, the orders that these enterprises receive from the Defense Ministry are not enough to sustain production at full capacity. In order to overcome this difficulty, the Ukrainian defense minister, Valeriy Shmarov, told directors of the enterprises to accept orders from elsewhere in order to sustain production and provide jobs.

Economic Issues

Marchuk Notes Stabilization in Grain Production

LD2612161695 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1408 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Dec 26 (Interfax - Ukraine) — Ukrainian Prime Minister Yevgeny Marchuk noted stabilization in 1995 in production of grain, sugar beet and sunflower seeds.

Addressing in the Ukrainian capital Kiev on Tuesday a conference on agro-industrial policies, Marchuk said that this year the grain production amounted to around 35.5 million tonnes, which approximately corresponds to last year's level.

According to him, this year Ukraine has harvested 30 million tonnes of sugar beet, from which it produced 3 million tonnes of sugar (300,000 tonnes more than last year), and also harvested 2.8 million tonnes of sunflower seeds (1.3 million tonnes more than last year).

Under the state contract on wheat, the state received 3.9 million tonnes with the required amount being 7 million tonnes, Marchuk said, adding that the state will gradually buy grain from producers.

Next year the state contract will amount to 5 million tonnes of grain, including 450 tonnes of elite seeds. In addition, 5 million tonnes are to be bought from producers for the money taken from the local budgets,

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credits of commercial banks and other sources of financing.

He said that the cancellation of quotas and licences for exports of agricultural produce cause its growth this year up to $2 billion. Exports mainly involve raw materials, not ready-made products. Marchuk estimated the import of foodstuffs to Ukraine in 1995 at $560 million. According to him, imports in such quantities negatively affects the amount of national production. The government, said the prime minister, will carry out an active protectionist policy and prepared draft resolutions on increasing import duties for foodstuffs.

The Cabinet will also stick to the principle "of equality of all forms of property in the countryside," said Marchuk. According to him, 78 percent of collective farms have received documents for the right for the collective ownership of land. Allocating employees a share of land and assets in 92 percent of collective farms has caused the creation of "private-collective" businesses.

To prepare for the sowing campaign, said Marchuk, the government will set aside to farms for the purchase of spare parts and machinery 5 trillion Karbovantsy from the money planned for financing the state contract. He emphasized the development of agricultural machine-building.

Marchuk Notes 1995 Agricultural 'Crisis'

LD2612105095 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0915 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The crisis in the agricultural sector has deteriorated over the year 1995. Every fourth enterprise will end the financial year 1995 with losses, the total volume of which will amount to 23,000 billion karbovantsy. By 1 October 1995, the arrears by agricultural enterprises on all types of payments had increased 3.6-fold compared with the beginning of the year, and their absolute insolvency had increased 8.8-fold. This was noted on 26 December at the national conference on agricultural policy by Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk.

According to him, agricultural employees remain in 22d place as far as wages are concerned among 25 branches of the economy. From 1990 to 1995, the wages of peasants have increased only 8,000-fold while the expenditure on mineral fertilizers — 84,000-fold and on fuel and lubricants — 55,000-fold. Yevhen Marchuk noted that meat production has been reduced by 45 percent over the past five years; milk, by 30 percent; and eggs, by 42 percent.

Finance Minister Presents 1996 Draft Budget

WS2512093395 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0840 GMT 25 Dec 95

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On 21 December during the afternoon session of the Ukrainian Supreme Council, Ukrainian Finance Minister Petro Hetmanchuk presented a draft national budget for 1996. He stated that the expected budget deficit (6 percent) will be covered from three sources: governmental internal loans (150 trillion karbovantsi [K]), external sources of financing (K170 trillion), and credits of the National Bank of Ukraine (K107 trillion).

The most important role in the income structure is allocated to VAT (22.4 percent) and the profit tax (15 percent). Hetmanchuk said that in 1996 the government intends to increase land taxation rate 1.45-fold. The draft budget foresees the creation of the development fund for fuel and energy sector. The budget for 1996 also includes a number of extra-budget funds. Among these are, for example, the Chernobyl Fund and the Innovational Fund. It is expected to decrease the amount of contributions from the Privatization Fund to local budgets. In 1995, these contributions amounted to 80 percent of the total volume of this fund. Petro Hetmanchuk emphasized that the latest governmental reviews revealed that over K200 billion from the Chernobyl Fund were misused.

Commenting on the expenses structure for 1996, Finance Minister Hetmanchuk stated that K73.2 trillion will be allocated to agricultural companies; K60 trillion to financing the executive branch and local governments. He assured that the amount of the latter index was decreased by 20 percent compared with the current year. Petro Hetmanchuk added that in 1996 the government intends to set up a special subvention fund of K37 trillion to be used for donations required by various Ukrainian regions.

Bank Head Forecasts 'Further Stabilization'

LD2612162695 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian 0915 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The peculiarities of the functioning of the banking system have led to the financial stability during the current year, according to Viktor Yushchenko, the head of the Board of the National Bank of Ukraine, at the final meeting of the year of the Financial Club. He said that this made it possible to raise the activity of the hard currency market by 4.5 times in comparison with 1992. More hard currency now returns to Ukraine than is taken out. Over

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the past four months, there has been no devaluation of the national monetary unit. This process of optimization of the financial system has made it possible to overcome the hyperinflation and high inflation. Wages have grown accordingly. While last year it was $25, this year each working person receives $56 dollars.

At its meeting, the Financial Club discussed the demands of the National Bank of Ukraine that commercial banks set up authorized and other funds. In that issue, in the opinion of Viktor Yushchenko, there is no required stabilization. Commercial banks are actively pursuing their business aims, investing money in land and buildings, and buying arts objects. But when time comes to pay their clients, i.e., to return money, they have no money.

Parodoxical situations happen when investors are offered antiques instead of money because the banks fail to fulfill the main rule of the banking system, which is to have an authorized capital. This is a serious violation, in the opinion of Viktor Yushchenko, head of the Board of the National Bank of Ukraine, who does not promise an easy life for such banks. The banks which cannot sustain their authorized funds will eventually collapse. Only strong commercial banks will remain.

Forecasting the development of the financial situation in Ukraine for the next year, Viktor Yushchenko said that there is every opportunity for further stabilization of the financial system.

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Kazakhstan

President Nazarbayev Arrives in Israel

LD2612111495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1103 GMT 26 Dec 95

[By Anatoliy Kerzhentsev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEL AVIV, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan arrived in Israel on Tuesday [26 December] for a three-day official visit. He is to be received by Israeli President Ezer Weizmann and meet with Foreign Minister Ehud Barak later in the day.

On Wednesday Nazarbayev is to hold talks with Premier and Defence Minister Shim'on Peres on further development of bilateral cooperation, particularly in the economic and military spheres.

At the close of the talks, the two sides are expected to sign a number of documents, including a Declaration of Friendship and protocols on cooperation in agriculture, medicine, conservation of nature, and protection of investments.

The President of Kazakhstan is being accompanied by a 100-member delegation consisting of Cabinet ministers, senior officials, and businessmen.

Israeli political, economic and military circles attach much importance to Nazarbayev's visit, emphasising that Kazakhstan possesses great natural wealth and is interested in foreign investments, and pointing out the promising nature of military-technical cooperation between the two states, since Kazakhstan has reportedly shown interest in Israeli assistance in modernising its aeronautical equipment, defence industry conversion to civilian production, and in fighting terrorism.

Military Adviser Favors Close Cooperation With Russia

LD2312161395 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1039 GMT 23 Dec 95

[By KAZTAG correspondent Ivan Zakharchenko for ITAR-TASS]

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty, 23 Dec — The Army of the sovereign Kazakhstan cannot get along without close cooperation with Russia's Armed Forces, General Sagadat Nurmagambetov, presidential adviser on military issues and hero of the Soviet Union, said today after the solemn ceremony devoted to the graduation of cadets from the Almaty higher military school. He noted with satisfaction that in the coming year the Kazakh Armed Forces would receive over 200 officers who had been trained in Russia's military educational establishments.

The former all-arms higher military school in Almaty, which has now become a multiskilled higher military educational establishment, is still named after Marshal of the Soviet Union Ivan Konev and bears this name with pride.

Central Election Commission on Run-Off Elections

LD2512093095 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0918 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMATY, December 25 (Itar-Tass) — "Run-off elections to the Kazakh Majlis (the lower house of the parliament) were held on Saturday [23 December] in all the 24 constituencies. Now the parliament will be able to get down to work," Itar-Tass was told today by Chairman of the Kazakh Central Election Commission Yuriy Kim.

Run-off elections were necessary because only 41 of the needed 67 mps were elected as a result of the December 9 parliamentary elections. Moreover, nine of them were not registered by the Central Election Commission, which began additional checks in reply to complaints of other candidates and voters against violations committed during the voting. Therefore, the Majlis, which lacked the necessary quorum of 45 mps, could not get down to work.

The run-off elections of December 23 were held in 24 single-mandate constituencies. They were contested in each by two candidates, who polled the biggest number of votes during the initial elections, but not less than 50 per cent plus one. Now the winner needed to get only a simple majority of votes, but not less than forty per cent.

If the newly elected mps will be registered, the Majlis, just as the Senate, which was practically formed as a result of the December 4 elections, will be able to begin work.

Kyrgyzstan

Presidential Election Begins; Akayev Comments

LD2412083495 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0645 GMT 24 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Alisher Niyazov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bishkek, 24 Dec — Of the total electorate in the presidential election, which began in Kyrgyzstan today, 10.71 percent had voted by 0900. According to data from the Central Electoral Commission, voters in Issyk-Kul Region are proving the most active with 16.08 percent of the total number of voters having already voted. Then comes Naryn Region with

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14.97 percent and Chu Region — the largest in the country — with 12.01 percent. In the capital, Bishkek, 6.95 percent had voted by 0900 Moscow time

Current head of state Askar Akayev, who is standing for reelection, cast his ballot at a polling station in a secondary school in Bishkek. He told the ITAR-TASS correspondent in an interview that this first alternative wide-scale election in Kyrgyzstan is very important for the democratic reform of all spheres of Kyrgyz society, which began in the country four years ago. In the opinion of the president, the outcome of the election could lead to one of two results — either a return to "the planned economy and the ideologization [ideologizatsiya] of society" or to the continuation of the democratic reforms that began four years ago. Akayev said that their results were to be seen in "the macroeconomic stabilization achieved in the country in the outgoing year and the real democratization of all spheres of Kyrgyz society."

Over 90 Percent Vote in Elections

LD2412213295 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 2105 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On Sunday presidential elections were held in Kyrgyzstan. The central electoral commission reports that almost 92 percent of the electorate cast their votes. This means that the elections can be considered valid.

We do not have any news so far as to who has won. This will become known probably tonight or early on 25 December.

Akayev Wins Convincing Election Victory

LD2512065795 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0407 GMT 25 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Alisher Niyazov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bishkek, 25 Dec — Kyrgyz leader Askar Akayev retains the post of president for another five years having won a convincing victory in the presidential election on Sunday [24 December]. The Central Electoral Commission has just told ITAR-TASS that, according to preliminary information, Askar Akayev won almost 75 percent of the votes cast by the 86 percent of the electorate who turned out for the election. This guarantees him victory over his two rivals — leader of the Kyrgyz Communists Absamat Masaliyev and Medetkan Sherimkulov, former parliamentary Speaker.

Akayev Will Not Purge Opposition

LD2512104295 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1030 GMT 25 Dec 95

[By Alisher Niyazov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BISHKEK December 25 (Itar-Tass) — Askar Akayev won a convincing victory in the presidential elections, Kamil Bayalinov, the Press Secretary of the present Kyrgyz leader, told a briefing here on Monday [25 December].

This statement of the press service was issued even before the Central Electoral Commission summed up the results of the Sunday voting and officially announced its results. There are virtually no doubts about the victory of present Kyrgyz leader Akayev. According to preliminary information, the majority of voters cast their ballots for him — both in his native land, Kyrgyzstan's northern Naryn region (92 per cent), and in the south of the country, where the opposition is more entrenched, (51 per cent). The Press Secretary stated Akayev intends to cooperate as President with all political forces in the country, including supporters of his rivals to the presidency, as well as with the parliament.

Akayev so far has no plans for radical purges in the oppositionally-minded part of the government which reflects the alignment of clans in the republic, the Press Secretary said.

According to preliminary information of the Kyrgyz Central Electoral Commission, nearly 75 per cent of the voters who went to the polls cast their ballots for Akayev.

Akayev: Elections 'Real Step' Toward Democracy

LD2512155495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1547 GMT 25 Dec 95

[By Alisher Niyazov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BISHKEK, December 25 (Itar-Tass) - Kyrgyz leader Askar Akayev, who won a landslide victory in Sunday's [24 December] presidential poll, has qualified the elections as "another real step made by the Kyrgyz people towards the establishment of a democratic society."

Speaking to Itar-Tass on Monday, Akayev stressed that the high turnout (up to 90 per cent according to official data) in the elections was not occasional and displayed "a striking illustration of democratic process" in the republic, confirming its "aspiration to continue democratic reforms launched five years ago."

According to preliminary information from the republican Central Electoral Commission, Akayev gained about 74 per cent of the vote.

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Two other aspirants for the presidency — former leader of the Kyrgyz Communist Party in Soviet times Absamat Masaliyev and ex-speaker of parliament Medetkan Sherimkulov — collected 17 and 5 per cent of votes, respectively.

Re-Election Means Reforms To Continue

LD2512183595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1546 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BISHKEK, Dec 25 (Interfax) — By supporting the present Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev at the December 24 presidential elections, Kyrgyzstan's electorate chose the course of continuing democratic reforms, director of the presidential Institute for Strategic Research Akylkek Saliyev told Interfax Monday.

The Kyrgyz people "approve of the presidential course and want it to be continued," Saliyev said. Commenting on the preliminary election results, he said "the people do not want to go back to the former Soviet Union, as the presidential candidate from the republic's Communist Party Absamat Masaliyev thought." He added that "the electors also know the former parliamentary speaker, Medetkan Sherimkulov, well enough not to support these candidacies."

According to preliminary information provided by Kyrgyzstan's Central Electoral Commission, 73.9 percent of Kyrgyz voters supported Akayev, 20 percent Masaliyev and only three percent Sherimkulov.

"Akayev's victory should not be regarded as landslide; this is a normal reaction by the electors, and their choice is quite logical," Saliyev said.

Tajikistan

Rakhmanov, Uzbek President Discuss Economic Cooperation

LD2612185895 Dushanbe Radio Tajikistan Network in Tajik 1200 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmanov had a telephone conversation today with President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov. A KHOVAR news agency correspondent learned from Zafar Saidov, the head of state's press secretary, that the two fraternal independent states' leaders had sincerely congratulated both countries' people on the coming New Year and wished each other's countries every success in building a democratic society, in carrying out economic reform and in achieving peace and security in the region and in the world. During the conversation some aspects of bilateral economic relations were focused on, including the regular transfer of gas to Tajikistan, extension of the term for repayment of debts, trade relations, and other topics. The presidents agreed that the sides' working groups were to be organized to discuss a range of issues linked to economic relations and other trends of bilateral cooperation and to prepare a meeting of senior officials from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These groups will gather in Tashkent soon. The telephone conversation between the presidents of both fraternal neighboring states was sincere and businesslike and was held in an atmosphere of complete mutual understanding.

Opposition Opposes Further Talks, Cites Offensive

LD2212154095 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1305 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 22 (Interfax) — The Tajik opposition delegation to the inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabat considers it inexpedient to resume the dialogue with Dushanbe authorities. The dialogue started on November 30, says a statement of the delegation heads made Friday.

A reason for this "is the on-going offensive of the Tajik government troops supported by Russian aviation against opposition units and settlements of the Tavildarinskiy region of Tajikistan," says the document. The Moscow trip of the U.N. secretary-general's special envoy Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, which aimed to achieve fulfillment of the Teheran agreement, did not help to settle the problem. "It seems that promises given to Piriz-Ballon in Moscow were not confirmed by deeds, and the combat operations go on," says the document.

In response to "the opposition delegation's proposals on political problems, the Tajik government delegation offers solutions which are far from the essence of the issues discussed," says the statement.

That is why the opposition leaders think that the dialogue should not be resumed until a Commonwealth summit of January 1996 clearly outlines the stand of Commonwealth leaders on political settlement in Tajikistan, and the leaders confirm their stands with actions.

The opposition leaders believe that the peace-making forces should reaffirm their neutrality and stop protecting the Dushanbe regime and authorities.

Opposition Leader Urges CIS To Help Resolve Tajik Crisis

LD2412152595 Tehran IRNA in English 1449 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dushanbe, Dec. 24, IRNA — Leader of Tajik opposition, Abdullah Nouri on Sunday

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urged the heads of state of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to clarify their stand towards the political and military crises in Tajikistan.

Issuing a statement at the end of the peace talks in Ashgabat, he invited the CIS heads of state having troops in Tajikistan to try to find a solution to the Tajik crisis in their forthcoming meeting in Moscow next month.

The statement said the countries of the region should admit that the Tajik crisis has only one solution and that is abandoning all acts of hostility and resorting to peaceful means.

The opposition said in its statement the civil war in the republic has pushed hundreds of thousands of people into poverty, spread terror and fear. It cautioned that continuation of the infighting would only be to the detriment of the Tajik people.

Nouri said full implementation of Tehran ceasefire agreement would be a prerequisite for entering into peace talks between the opposition and tajik government.

Dushanbe Not Opposed to UN Regional Peacekeeping Force

LD2212192295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1611 GMT 22 Dec 95

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature: compiled by Anna Kovalyova, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Emomali Rakhmanov at a meeting with Director of Russia's Federal Border Service Andrey Nikolayev in Dushanbe on Thursday said there was nothing wrong with the idea of creating a UN-sponsored regional peacekeeping force put forward by the presidents of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. But this must be within the framework of the CIS, he said. IF Note: The presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan meeting in Dzhambul (southern Kazakhstan) last week appealed to the UN Secretary General to consider the possibility of forming a regional peacekeeping force under UN aegis to be deployed in the south of Kazakhstan.

They stressed the new force could be used in Bosnia and various troublespots rather than to maintain stability in Tajikistan where CIS peacekeepers were now deployed.

For his part, Nikolayev in an interview with Interfax said the three-nation initiative should not be seen as an attempt to contrast regional forces to CIS collective security forces or CIS peacekeepers.

(Nikolayev who is on a two-day visit in Dushanbe is expected to take part in a planned meeting by CIS border troop commanders on Friday — IF).

The Russian military official said he and Rakhmanov had discussed security-related issues and how to implement the CIS security deal politically, militarily and economically. He said Dushanbe was seeing the military aspect as being more important than others, albeit not decisive for national security.

Nikolayev who hopes for further Dushanbe-Moscow cooperation said Tajikistan finding itself at a crossroads of many problems was playing a key role in ensuring stability and security in Central Asia and the CIS as a whole. "By solving the problem of Tajikistan, we solve those of each CIS state," he said adding this would come high on the agenda of the next CIS summit due in Moscow on January 19.

Nikolayev said the CIS border troop commanders are expected to discuss key issues set by the CIS heads of state for this year and next as well as the problems of "our integration."

He said Dushanbe and Moscow had agreed to seek greater effectiveness in fulfilling the tasks in hand at low cost and without a further build up of weapons and troops on the Afghan border.

As an alternative though a hard one, he sees in the development of cooperation with Afghan border representatives and promotion of trade between border areas of Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

Nikolayev does not think current tensions on the Afghan border could help towards peace talks, now under way in Ashgabat.

In the meantime, government officials and opposition leaders are expected to meet in what will be the last round of talks this year.

Chief opposition negotiator Akbar Turadzhonzoda told Interfax the negotiation would break up until mid-January because of New Year holidays. He reaffirmed the two sides would meet again in Ashgabat next year.

In the meanwhile, the Tajik opposition's delegation said Friday that it deemed it unreasonable to resume dialogue with Dushanbe before the CIS leaders determined their attitude towards the inter-Tajik conflict at their summit in January 1996. The opposition said the CIS heads of state should also back their position with "concrete actions."

The Tajik opposition explained its stand by saying that Tajik government troops were continuing offensives on opposition units and civilians in the country's Tavildarin

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region. The opposition also said that Tajik government troops were supported by Russian air mower.

The opposition said the Tajik government's delegation was advancing proposals which stood too far from the essence of the political issues being discussed.

Russian Official: Opposition Conditions 'Unacceptable'

LD2212211895 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1914 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 22 (Interfax) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Chernyshev told Interfax today that the Tajik opposition was advancing "unacceptable conditions" at the Tajik government-opposition talks in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan.

"In fact, the opposition proposes to the Tajik government, 'You leave and we will come and take your seat.' Things do not happen like that. This is not a basis for a compromise," he said.

If the parties are really seeking reconciliation, they could not avoid reaching a compromise, Chernyshev said.

Some elements of each party's proposals can be laid in the foundation of the mutually acceptable solution, he said.

Chernyshev said he did not want to over-dramatize the drawbacks in the inter-Tajik talks. He said the parties were at the stage of sending requests to each other. "A true dialogue will begin only after this wave of requests goes down," he said.

Russia, as a mediator for settlement of the inter-Tajik conflict, intends to continue making moves for bringing the Tajik parties closer, Chernyshev said. "Obviously, the dialogue will not be easy or quick. However, only talks can bring peace to Tajik soil," he said.

Afghan Guards Arrest Tajik Opposition Field Commander

LD2612104795 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1022 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dushanbe, December 26 (Itar-Tass) — The border authorities of Afghanistan have arrested Nozim Karimov, one of the chief field commanders of the united Tajik opposition, Itar-Tass was told today at the press centre of the command of the Russian Borderguard Forces in Tajikistan. Men from Karimov's detachment, which is based on the territory of Afghanistan, shelled from heavy guns on December 24 a Russian borderguard patrol from the 9th post of the Pyanj borderguard unit.

Karimov's arrest, a representative of the press centre stressed, was carried out as part of the joint actions of Russian and Afghan borderguards to strengthen trust-building measures and stabilise the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border.

Touching on the general situation on the border, the representative of the press centre said it was difficult due to continuing armed provocations against Russian border posts. This runs counter to the statements made by leaders of the united Tajik opposition that they are allegedly honouring the intra-Tajik ceasefire agreement, officials of the press centre stressed.

According to these sources, all such violations were reported to the U.N. permanent observers mission, accredited in Dushanbe, and also to the military observers, who said that they would carry out an independent investigation of the new armed provocations.

Turkmenistan

Iranian Foreign Minister Arrives in Ashgabat

LD2412160695 Tehran IRNA in English 1544 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Ashgabat on Sunday and was welcomed by Turkmen deputy prime minister and foreign minister, Boris Shikhmurodev.

Accompanied by officials from the ministry of roads and transportation, the president's office and the governor general of Khorasan Province, Velayati is to attend the second meeting of the coordination and planning committee in charge of opening Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway.

The 295 km rail track is expected to become operational next spring. The regional heads of states will attend the inaugural ceremony to be held for the strategic railway.

The railway will serve to connect Iranian railway network to that of the Central Asia and accelerate transport of goods to and from the central Asia.

The Iranian delegation is scheduled to hold negotiations with Turkmen officials on holding the inaugural ceremony for Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway and forming a free trade area as well as building an airport in the area.

Discusses Tajik Developments

LD2512102395 Tehran IRNA in English 0756 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA — The latest developments in Tajikistan and the progress

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made in the peace talks were discussed in a meeting in Ashgabat on Sunday between the U.N. secretary general's special envoy for Tajikistan, Ramiro Piriz-Ballon, and Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Referring to resumption of the fifth round of the Tajik peace talks, scheduled for January 15, 1996 in Ashgabat, Piriz-Ballon praised Iran's efforts. He called for continuation of Iran's policies, which he termed as "valuable and useful" in establishing peace among the opposition groups and the Tajik Government.

Velayati reiterated that Tehran was ready to render all kinds of assistance in this respect.

The Iranian foreign minister is currently in Ashgabat to attend the second session of the Iran-Turkmenistan joint coordination and planning committee and to attend the inauguration ceremony of Mashahd-Sarakhs-Tajan railway.

In a separate meeting Velayati held talks with head of the negotiating group at the Tajik peace talks, Akbar Tourjanzadeh, on Sunday who briefed Velayati on the latest developments in the Tajik peace process.

Tourjanzadeh emphasized fundamental role of Iran in restoration of peace in his country, adding that the agreements reached in Tehran by Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov and the leader of Tajik opposition group, were significant.

Velayati reiterated importance of restoring stability in Tajikistan and said that a just and honorable peace could be achieved through continuation of talks among the belligerent parties.

Meets With President Niyazov

LD2512132095 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] 'Ali Akbar Velayati, our country's foreign minister, who is visiting Turkmenistan, has met Turkman President Saparmurad Niyazov.

At the meeting President Niyazov stated that the Turkmen nation would never forget the selfless support and assistance of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He also handed Velayati a written message addressed to President Hashemi-Rafsanjani and said that Turkmen's declaration of neutrality would not have been realized without Iran's support.

Velayati also expressed congratulations on the occasion of UN approval of Turkmenistan's neutrality and positively evaluated the results of his visit to Turkmenistan. He said: During the visit we talked, exchanged views, and achieved positive results about a session of the heads of Economic Cooperation Organization member states, ways of making the organization more active, the progress of the construction of the Mashhad-Sarakhs railway, creation of a free trade zone in Sarakhs, the work to build Hari Rud dam, and preparation to invite heads of states to participate in the opening ceremonies of the above mentioned projects. [passage omitted]

Further on Meeting

LD2512135795 Tehran IRNA in English 1321 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ashgabat, Dec. 25, IRNA — President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurad Niyazov, meeting with Iran's foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, in Ashgabat on Monday said Tehran and Ashgabat enjoyed ever lasting brotherhood and friendship.

The Turkmen president called for expansion of relations between his country and the Islamic Republic of Iran in all areas, adding he has instructed all officials of Turkmenistan's executive organizations to take urgent action for implementation of mutual agreements.

President Niyazov handed over his written message for his Iranian counterpart President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to Velayati and said the government and people of Turkmenistan will never the Iranian president's friendly attitudes towards Turkmenistan. [sentence as received]

Iran's foreign minister submitted President Niyazov the official invitation of President Rafsanjani to visit Iran. President Niyazov welcomed the invitation and said he will travel to Iran this winter.

The Iranian foreign minister presented one thousand copies of the book KHAFI ALAEI, authored by Esmail Jorjani which deals with Islamic medicine to President Niyazov on behalf of his Iranian counterpart.

Holds Talks With Shikhmuradov

LD2412180795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 24 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's foreign minister, Mr. Velayati, who has travelled to Ashgabat, today met and conferred with Boris Shikhmuradov, deputy chairman and foreign minister of Turkmenistan.

At the meeting, the two officials discussed and studied issues concerning greater expansion of ties and bilateral, multilateral, and regional cooperation; the progress of building the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway; the Sarakhs airport and the creation of a free trade zone.

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The meeting which was also attended by the secretary general of the Economic Cooperation Organization, ECO, also discussed the plans, projects and ways of increasing cooperation between ECO member countries. The next meeting of the leaders of [ECO] member-countries was also discussed. The meeting is due to take place in Ashgabat next year.

According to the Central News Unit, the second joint meeting of the coordination and planning committee of the ceremony marking the inauguration of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway, convened this afternoon at Ashgabat, chaired by Mr. Velayati.

This railway, which is 295 km long and links Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, is due to become operational next spring.

Departs After Talks

LD2512135895 Tehran IRNA in English 1325 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ashgabat, Dec. 25, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his Turkmen counterpart Boris Shikhmuratov here Monday held their second round of talks.

The two sides underlined the need for prompt formulation of a legal regime for the Caspian Sea to pave the way for the appropriate exploitation of its resources and to protect its environment.

They also expressed satisfaction over implementation of projects for the opening of Mashhad-Sarakhs and Sarakhs-Tajan railways, Sarakhs Free Trade Zone and for construction work on Chari-roud's dam.

The two foreign ministers also discussed crisis in Afghanistan and ways to put an end to clashes and bloodshed in that country and also exchanged views on finding a peaceful solution to the crisis in Tajikistan.

Velayati Monday afternoon wound up his two-day visit to Turkmenistan and left Ashgabat for Tehran. He was seen off at the airport by his Turkmen counterpart Shikhmuratov.

Shikhmuradov Interviewed on Caspian Sea Issue

LD2312163195 Tehran IRNA in English 1512 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ashgabat, Dec. 23, IRNA — Turkmenistan Vice-President and Foreign Minister, Boris Shikhmuradov, said on Saturday that Iran and Turkmenistan shared common views on the Caspian Sea, adding that the two countries are equally concerned with the need to immediately determine a legal regime for the world's largest inland sea.

Talking to IRNA correspondent in Ashgabat, he added without settlement of the Caspian Sea legal system no stable and secure cooperation could be established in the region.

The Turkmen foreign minister stressed that codification of the question relating to the Caspian Sea is a prerequisite for the exploitation of the rich resources of the sea by the littoral states.

He said the Caspian Sea littoral states should not allow foreign powers to interfere in the affairs of the sea.

On the Tajikistan peace talks, Shikhmuradov remarked that the fifth round of Tajikistan peace talks which began some time ago in Ashgabat under the supervision of the UN and representatives from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan and Russia, have again stalled because of some problems.

He called on the conflicting parties to observe self-restraint to find an immediate settlement of the Tajikistan crisis and establish peace and security in that country.

The minister added that Tajikistan peace talks are to resume in Ashgabat on January 15 next year.

Shikhmuradov said that Iran and Turkmenistan have so far made many efforts for settlement of the Tajikistan problems, adding that "we are still determined to work out a political and peaceful solution to the crisis".

On the construction of pipe line for transfer of Turkmenistan gas to Europe via Iran, Shikhmuradov said Turkmenistan is determined to lay the pipeline through Iran despite the existing pressures exerted by the West.

He stressed that Turkmenistan is an independent country and makes decision independently in establishing relations with other countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, and allows no country to interfere in this respect.

The Turkmen foreign minister noted that at present the construction work on a small gas pipeline has begun, adding that the work is a starting point for implementation of the giant project in the future.

Shikhmuradov said there are some problems in the way of the implementation of the giant project, adding that Iran and Turkmenistan are talking to settle the problem.

Uzbekistan

President Issues Decree on Savings, Insurance

LD2312121195 Tashkent PRAVDA VOSTOKA in Russian 21 Dec 95 p1

[FBIS Translated Text] A decree by the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan on indexing the population's

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savings and on state insurance with the aim of ensuring social justice, of strengthening the people's trust in securities and deposits in banks, and of protecting the population's savings:

1. It has been found necessary to carry out indexation beginning 1996 through step-by-step compensation:

For the population's money held on accounts in banking institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the basis of their bank balances on 1 January 1992 and for their accounts in operation up to 1 January 1996;

For payments made by the population in line with long-term life insurance contracts, for insurance on children and for "by the day of marriage" insurance concluded in establishments of the main state insurance department before 1 January 1995 and those in force up to 1 January 1996.

2. It shall be laid down that citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other nationals permanently living in the Republic have the right to indexation of savings in banking institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and in the main state insurance department.

3. The Ministry of Finance, the State Committee for Statistics and Forecasting, the Central Bank, and the People's Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan are instructed to make the necessary calculations for indexing the population's savings as indicated in Paragraph 1, taking account of price rises over the given period;

Submit proposals to the Cabinet of Ministers on a single procedure and terms for making differential payments on the basis of the population's indexed savings on accounts, as well as on the basis of insurance fees under long-term insurance contracts.

4. The People's Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the main state insurance department and commercial banks are instructed to carry out the stocktaking of all deposits and insurance fees paid in line with long-term contracts on life insurance, on children insurance, and on marriage insurance and to index them;

To open special "Indexation" accounts by 1 March 1996, transferring into them the population's money kept on accounts on 1 January 1992 and money on their accounts in operation up to 1 January 1996;

On the basis of opened special "Indexation" accounts, by 1 July 1996, to distribute savings bank books to citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan on presentation of a passport, to other nationals permanently living in the Republic on presentation of a residence permit and to military servicemen on presentation of the appropriate documents valid as a passport;

To pay the population money on the basis of their indexed accounts, and insurance fees in line with long-term insurance contracts, in stages over ten years starting from 1 July 1996, and at different rates depending on the year of payment.

5. A proposal put forward by commercial banks in the Republic of Uzbekistan on indexing accounts opened before 1 January 1992 and accounts in operation up to 1 January 1996 using their own resources is to be accepted.

6. To recommend to the People's Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan and to commercial banks that they pay interest rates annually for money held on the population's compensated accounts on the basis of the current interest rate established for "current" accounts. Taking the level of inflation into account, these interest rates shall be reviewed annually.

7. To cover expenses connected with payments on the population's deposits and those on state insurance contracts, a republican fund called the Compensation Fund is to be established at the People's Bank.

The regulations of the republican Compensation Fund (Qoplash Fondi) at the People's Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan are to be approved in accordance with Appendix No. 1.

The state budget, banking institutions, extra-budget funds, and donations made voluntarily by legal and natural persons are to be designated as sources for the Compensation Fund.

8. A republican commission made up of people on the list in Appendix No. 2 is to be set up for dealing with matters connected with indexation and payments on the population's savings.

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakistan, heads of regional administrations and that of Tashkent city shall establish appropriate commissions in the Republic of Karakalpakistan, in regions, in Tashkent city, in districts and towns.

9. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall adopt a resolution within a week ensuring the implementation of this decree.

[Signed] Islam Karimov, president of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
[Issued] Tashkent City, 20 December 1995.

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President Karimov Criticizes Media Standards

LD2612192595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1746 GMT 26 Dec 95

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Islam Karimov has called on the mass media for regular coverage of the government-launched reforms in the current phase of Uzbekistan's development.

In a speech at the cabinet meeting discussing the republican mass media on Tuesday, he said the media's main task was to explain the public at large that it is the sense of private ownership that would help people improve their life. He expressed regret that the mass media was often full of subsidiary materials carrying no information at all.

Karimov said as it was now, media activity was not up to the tasks set by the government. He pointed to a lack of materials carrying profound analysis of the course of social reforms.

Local observers say the meeting is expected to take radical measures aimed at straightening out media work including a reorganization of the Uzbekistan news agency. The meeting involved senior cabinet and government officials as well as media representatives.

IMF To Release Second Part of Standby Credits

LD2212185695 Tashkent Uzbekistan Television in Russian 1638 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The economic reforms under way in the republic have received new support from the world community. The chairman of the IMF in his 18 December meeting adopted an allocation of credits to Uzbekistan totaling $259 million to support the government's economic reform. Of this, $185 million are being allocated under the agreement on standby credits and $74 million within the framework of the second tranche, part of the Systemic Transformation Facility [STF] credit, the mechanism for financing reform [in former Communist countries]. The published official announcement by the IMF says that Uzbekistan has made significant progress in achieving macroeconomic stabilization and economic reform. It was in support of this that the first tranche of the STF credit, the same sum [$74 million], was allocated to the republic in January this year.

A significant reduction in the rate of inflation was achieved in 1995, structural and institutional reforms have been set in motion, and transfer of the national economy to a market economy system is being stepped up. Of the CIS countries, Uzbekistan has the best comparative indicators for the drop in manufacturing. Political stability and a tough economic and credit policy have brought financial stabilization, liberalization of prices, and expansion of the currency market. The step by step transfer to economic reform, the account taken of the need for a strong social policy, and the full use made of the country's natural resources have been completely completely justified. The IMF has noted that Uzbekistan's experience in carrying out economic reform merits careful study and comparison with what is happening in those countries which have not achieved the best results after hasty reform.

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Armenia

OSCE's Kazimirov Sees Need To Speed Up Karabakh Talks

NC2512214495 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1300 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Vladimir Kazimirov, Russian co-chairman of OSCE Minsk Group for the resolution of the Karabakh conflict, held a closed-door meeting with Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] President Robert Kocharyan and Foreign Minister Arkadi Ghukasyan on 23 December.

Kazimirov handed a message from the Russian President Boris Yeltsin to the NKR leadership.

According to Kazimirov, Russia intends to give an additional push to the negotiating process by inviting the sides to realistically evaluate those issues which can be solved without delay. Russian representative Vladimir Kazimirov told reporters in Stepanakert that the Russian president's message stems from a desire to resolve the conflict and to preclude a change of venue for the talks in the future.

Kazimirov noted that the political solution of the problem is going too slow and it is already noticeable that now that the Balkans problem is resolved the political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem will enter a new and more active phase.

Message From Yeltsin to Ter-Petrosyan

NC2312201095 Yerevan ARAGIL ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN in English 1154 GMT 23 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan ("ARAVOT" daily), 12/23/95 — Russian President's special envoy Vladimir Kazimirov arrived in Yerevan from Baku on 22 December, and delivered Russian President Boris Yeltsin's message to his Armenian counterpart Levon Ter-Petrosyan, concerning final resolution of the Karabakh conflict. It is expected that Kazimirov will then leave for Stepanakert.

Ter-Petrosyan Wants 'Flexible' Approach to Karabakh

NC2512195095 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 0641 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] 25/12/95 NOYAN TAPAN — On December 23, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan stated that Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh should display more flexible and constructive approaches as far as the settlement of Karabakh conflict is concerned.

"Knowing very well that international community is not going to tolerate such a 'neither war, nor peace' state between Karabakh and Azerbaijan too long. Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh should show more flexible and constructive approaches at negotiations", Levon Ter-Petrosyan said at the 7th congress of Armenian All National Movement [Armenian Pannational Movement—APM].

The President emphasized that at negotiations over Karabakh problem Armenia's position is the following: The conflict must be settled basing on the Karabakh population's right for self-determination provided political and physical security of Mountainous Karabakh is ensured. Azerbaijan and international community bring forward a principle of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, at the same time agreeing with a necessity to provide the security of Karabakh's population.

According to Levon Ter-Petrosyan negotiations within the framework of Minsk Group is not effective enough. The reasons are the strict position of the sides and the international community being busy with the problem of Bosnia. "After the latter problem is solved international community will pay greater attention to Karabakh one, and we already feel such a tendency", he said.

Ter-Petrosyan Nominated for Armenian Presidency

LD2312204595 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2016 GMT 23 Dec 95

[By Tigran Liloyan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] YEREVAN, December 23 (Itar-Tass) — The seventh congress of Armenia's ruling party, the Armenian National Movement (ANM), nominated incumbent President Levon Ter-Petrosyan as its candidate to run for Armenian presidency in the upcoming presidential elections to be held in the autumn of 1996.

This is one of the key decisions adopted by the congress that ended in the Armenian capital Yerevan on Saturday.

The congress participants adopted amendments to the ANM charter under which the congress, the party's supreme body, will be held biennially, not annually.

In his address to the congress, Ter-Petrosyan identified three main forces in the republic's political life: right-wing forces, liberal-democratic forces — advocating "democracy, private property and free enterprise" — and left-wing, socialist, forces which put an accent on social needs of the population. He also said there is a marginal force represented by ultra nationalists.

Ter-Petrosyan said he is ready to act as the leader of right-wing forces in Armenia.

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Armenian Pannational Movement Opens 7th Congress

NC2212200895 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1306 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Armenian Pannational Movement [APM] opened its 7th congress today. I begin the newscast with our correspondent Gevorg Nazarian's report, which has just been readied for our use. That is why we were late in airing this newscast and we apologize for that.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Chairman of the National Assembly Babken Araraktsyan, Vice President Gagik Harutyunyan, and guests were present at the congress. The conferees observed a minute of silence in memory of the freedom fighters who fell for Armenia's independence.

Next, a six-member presidium was elected. It includes Ter Husik Lazaryan, Ara Sahakyan, Karapet Rubinyan, Samuel Gevorgyan, Eduard Yegoryan, and Hovhannes Igityan. Following the election of the secretariat and tellers, and a mandate and an editorial commission; the congress' agenda and account of activity were established.

APM leader Ter Husik Lazaryan addressed the congress. [recorded passage indistinct]

Lazaryan particularly noted that the APM's importance has increased as evinced by the growing number of people joining its ranks. He also emphasized that presidential elections and provincial-territorial divisions will be the main problems of 1996. Though he did not say what new structure the APM will adopt under the new administrative divisions — whether it will have provincial councils comprising representatives from various territories, or keep its present regional structures under the juriadiction of a single republican administration — he said it is important to help implement speedily the new provincial-territorial divisions. If we successfully resolve these problems we will be achieving yet another victory since the adoption of the constitution and elections. While noting weaknesses of some regional organizations during the elections, Lazarian on the whole congratulated the conferees for the election victory.

Next, the 7th congress of the APM passed a resolution which notes the noticeable achievements of the authorities in the stabilization of the economy, and emphasizes the importance of the consolidation of the national currency. At the same time, the APM finds that there exist serious defects regarding efforts to improve the taxation and customs domains. According to the APM, the government was noticeably lax in resolving the problem of power supply to the population. Due to the delays in implementing the reforms drawn up two years ago, the government has virtually devalued its huge effort toward recommissioning the Metsamor nuclear plan. The APM believes that the introduction of supply-demand market relations in the power sector cannot be delayed anymore.

Karapet Rubinyan, a member of the APM administration and deputy chairman of Armenian National Assembly, delivered a report on the resolution.

Chairman of the National Assembly Babken Araraktsyan spoke next. [recorded passage indistinct]

At present, a number of candidates for the administrative board are being registered.

The congress will continue its work tomorrow. Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan will address it in the morning. Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan will speak before the conclusion of the congress.

Ter-Petrosyan Addresses APM Congress

NC2512191295 Yerevan SNARK in English 1005 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, December 25 (SNARK) — Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan stated at the 7th congress of the Armenian National Movement [Armenian Pannational Movement—APM] ruling party on December 23 that he is ready to head the union of Armenia's right-wing forces if their ideology is based on democracy, free market relations, protection of private entrepreneurs' rights.

According to him, the future union of rightists will be led by the Armenian National Movement Party and will be the majority in the Armenian National Assembly. In order to widen the bloc, negotiations must be conducted with Ramkavar Azatakan (Liberal-Democratic) Party, Shamiram Women's Party, as well as with unions of manufacturers, entrepreneurs and landowners. Ter-Petrosyan believes that this union will further become a wide coalition which at its first stage will be more like a federation. Later, all the forces will become members of a single party like the U.S. Republican or the UK Conservative Parties. Considering that such a powerful party will result in monopolization of power, a not less potential socialistic party should be established. This socialistic party must protect social interests of the nation and will be the left wing of the Armenian political spectrum.

Apart from right and left wings, non-socialistic parties may be formed in Armenia. These kind of parties are for democracy but sometimes if they are too powerful, may be dangerous for a state, the President added.

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Sahakyan Scores Armenian Communists' Telegram

NC2512191495 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 0718 GMT 25 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] 25/12/95 NOYAN TAPAN — Addressing the VII Congress of the Armenian All-National Movement [Armenian Pannational Movement—APM] Saturday [23 December], deputy Chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia Ara Sahakyan said that the Armenian Communists in their congratulation telegram to the Russian Communists outlined approaches contradicting the Constitution of Armenia.

Sahakyan advised those present to read the aforementioned telegram, warning, however, that "those who will read it are going to feel nothing but nausea". "From this telegram you will learn that your homeland is not Armenia, but some other country", he said.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia addressed a congratulation telegram to the Russian Communist Party [RCP] on occasion of their victory in the recent parliamentary elections. It is said in the telegram: "Your victory inspires with hope the long-suffering Armenian people and other peoples of our common homeland that the existing historic impasse at which we have been led by alleged democrats will be overcome.

"...We wish you luck in your struggle for revival of the new union of fraternal soviet peoples.

"We are right in our struggle and we will win".

Ara Sahakyan noted that this telegram is very much reminiscent of a telegram sent by Lenin to the Armenian Revolutionary Committee in 1920.

Vice-Speaker, as he put it, "taught Armenian communists three lessons". He, in particular, said that Articles 1 and 2 of the Armenian Constitution are not to be altered. These two Articles read that the Republic of Armenia is an independent state and that usurpation of power by any organization or physical entity is a crime.

According to Sahakyan, the telegram by Armenian communists is actually a call to the Red Army for intervention in Armenia and capture of power like in 1920.

Deputy Chairman of the Armenian Parliament said that the fact that Russian communists won 40 percent of seats in the State Duma "arises anxiety".

Lazaryan Reelected Leader

NC2612215895 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 2100 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The 7th congress of the Armenian Pannational Movement [APM] decided in its final session to convene an APM extraordinary congress on a date specified by law in order to put forward a presidential candidate for the Armenian Republic. It decided to call on the extraordinary congress to consider Levon Ter-Petrosyan's candidacy.

The newly elected administrative board of APM held its first meeting. Ter Husik Lazaryan was elected chairman of the administrative board.

Azerbaijan

Visiting German Foreign Minister Signs Agreements

LD2212144995 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1300 GMT 22 Dec 95

[By Sevindzh Abdulayeva and Viktor Shulman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BAKU, December 22 (Itar-Tass) — The negotiations between Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Germany, Gasan Gasanov and Klaus Kinkel, ended here today with the signing of a joint statement setting out the principles of relations between Azerbaijan and Germany. Klaus Kinkel arrived in Baku on Thursday after completing his visit to Armenia. The sides believe the document will serve as the basis for a framework agreement on friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The ministers also signed three agreements — on mutual protection of investment, cultural cooperation and care for cemeteries of German prisoners-of-war in Azerbaijan.

The Azeri Foreign Minister believes Germany is interested in cooperation with Azerbaijan in the use of energy sources. Specialists in this area arrived in Baku together with the German Foreign Minister and inspected the first Azeri-German oil extracting enterprise operating for about 18 months at an oil field near Baku.

The intergovernment memorandum on financial and economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Germany was signed here on Friday. It envisages the allocation to Azerbaijan of a low-interest credit of 10 million Deutsche mark for 40 years. The repayment of the credit is to begin in ten years. These funds will be used in Azerbaijan to create a security system for the Baku international airport. German partners will supply to Azeri colleagues 1.4 million marks as gratis aid in 1996 to train personnel to service the system.

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Aliyev, Kinkel Discussions Detailed

*NC2312110595 Baku TURAN in English
1645 GMT 22 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/22.12.95/TURAN—This evening President Aliyev met with German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel.

"Taking into account the work I have done today I think the relations between Germany and Azerbaijan have entered a new stage", President Aliyev said welcoming the guest.

"We attach great significance to the Caucasian region and intend to provide assistance to Azerbaijan in this difficult transition period. I mean the mediation in the Karabakh settlement and establishment of economic relations between EC and Azerbaijan and between Germany and EC", Klaus Kinkel said. He noted the Caucasus is an important region and Azerbaijan plays significant role in it. He mentioned after settlement of internal problems (unification of Germany) Germany can attract away from its problems and help to another states. "The countries of Eastern Europe and the former republics of the USSR hope that we will help them to enter NATO and provide economic assistance to them", Mr. Kinkel said.

President Aliyev said "Germany is not in hurry to come to the Caucasus", however Klaus Kinkel opposed to this opinion. "Out of 274 million ECU humanitarian assistance that Azerbaijan received from EC, 30 percent has been given by Germany. The heads of African, Latin America and ASEAN countries ask Germany to draw attention at them and you say we are too late in the Transcaucasus", he stressed.

President Aliyev expressed gratitude to Mr. Kinkel for wish of Germany to mediate to the Karabakh settlement and for the assistance provided to Azerbaijan. He welcomed Mr. Kinkel's words that Germany supports territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Armenia-Azerbaijan Hold Amsterdam Talks

*NC2512204895 Baku TURAN in English
1557 GMT 25 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/25.12.95/TURAN — Direct Armenian-Azeri talks between the state advisor of Azerbaijan Vafa Guluzade and advisor of the president of Armenian Zhirayr Liparityan will last at least till December 27, according to diplomatic sources in Baku.

The talks are confidential, without participation of mediators. The sides are discussing the key questions of the Armenian-Azeri settlement.

Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Gasan Gasanov told journalists that "the talks are normal yet."

Initially the meeting [in] Amsterdam was scheduled for two days, however, it has lasted for a week. The observers in Baku consider that delay means that the talks are resultative.

Censorship of Opposition Media Said Tightened

*NC2512205595 Baku TURAN in English
1557 GMT 25 Dec 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/25.12.95/TURAN — Censorship over the opposition and independent mass media of Azerbaijan strengthened again. Poll conducted among some mass media of the country shows that pressure of censorship weakened a bit after the elections were over. However, beginning from mid-December censorship strengthened again.

Thus, deputy editor of the leading opposition newspaper "AZADLIG" [FREEDOM] Surkhay Huseyinli told that in December censorship withdrew from the issues of newspaper four political articles , and about 10 articles were not allowed to be published. Last time that took place on December 23 when censor withdrew from "AZADLIG" newspaper the article about corruption in highest echelons of power. After the withdrawal of the article censor demanded to put other article instead of it.

According to editor of "CHAG" [ERA] newspaper Bahaddin Khaziyev , over the last month two articles were withdrawn completely and six materials were partially taken out of newspaper. Among those withdrawn materials there was an article about political career of speaker of the parliament Rasul Guliyev. According to Khaziyev the censorship finds fault with caricatures too.

Deputy Editor of other leading opposition newspaper "MUKHALIFAT" [OPPOSITION] Suleyman Osmanoglu said that over the last month all materials criticizing home and foreign policy by authorities were withdrawn by censorship. According to him, only articles with "soft" critics addressed to authorities were allowed.

According to Law on Press and Constitution of the county political censorship is not allowed in Azerbaijan. Despite that there is censorship in Azerbaijan and it is fulfills the role of muzzle on the opposition mass media.

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Georgia

Russian Minister Thanks Targamadze on Chechen Operation

LD2612160295 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian 1410 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 26 Dec — Major General Kakha Targamadze, Georgian Internal Affairs minister, today received a letter from the Russian Internal Affairs Minister Anatoliy Kulikov, in which the Russian interior minister thanks his Georgian colleague for successful completion of a wide-scale operation, Vikhr, held in Georgia. The aim of the operation was to prevent the expected terrorist and subversive actions of Chechen combatants and bandit formations.

In his letter of reply, Kakha Targamadze said that the Georgian Interior Ministry will continue cooperation with Russia in the future on the basis of the Georgian-Russian agreement.

Abkhaz Separatists To Receive Refugees From Chechnya

LD2612163295 Tbilisi SAKINFORM in Russian 1550 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hajarat, a socio-cultural organization acting in Abkhazia which supports the idea of Chechen independence, has circulated a statement. The statement in particular says that conditions have been created in Abkhazia for receiving refugees from Chechnya. Observers reckon Abkhaz separatists intend to introduce in Abkhazia a fresh contingent of the north Caucasian combatants disguised as refugees.

Ajarian Leader Concerned at Results of Turkish Elections

LD2712064295 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1315 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 26 Dec — Aslan Abashidze, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Ajaria, expressed his concern over the victory of pro-Islamic fundamentalist parties in the Turkish elections held on 24 December. Abashidze noted that the elections confirmed clearly how volatile the situation in Georgia's neighboring countries is. Georgian authorities must take this into consideration when conducting their policy with neighboring Russia and Turkey.

Interior Ministry Undergoes 'Structural Changes'

LD2612145295 Tbilisi IPRINDA in Russian 1410 GMT 26 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi, 26 Dec — Col. Valerian Gogolashvili, head of the Interior Ministry press center, told an agency correspondent today that structural changes are under way at the ministry, the aim of which is to concentrate operational forces and raise the role of regional and local police.

Administrative and investigatory departments of criminal police have been created. Only the Ministry of Internal Affairs retains the name; other subunits, except Interior Troops, are called police subunits. In particular, the Tbilisi Police Directorate of Internal Affairs will be renamed the Main Directorate of Police. As for the district departments, they will be called police directorates.

Demur Mikadze, head of the Main Directorate of the Tbilisi Police, is the first deputy interior minister as of today.

Shevardnadze Dissolves Team of Advisers

LD2712112695 Tbilisi SAKINFORM in Georgian 1030 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] [no dateline as received] — By decree of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, the head of state's apparatus has ceased its existence in view of the structural changes in the country's leadership.

Eduard Shevardnadze has met with officials from the former apparatus and stressed their great contribution to the positive changes which have recently taken place in every sphere of the country's life. Eduard Shevardnadze said apparatus officials have been and will remain a group of people who share the same ideas as him.

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Estonia

Meri Promulgates Troop Treaties With Russia

LD2712110595 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1000 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Estonian President Lennart Meri has promulgated the July agreements between Estonia and Russia, earlier ratified by the Riigikogu.

A week ago, the Riigikogu ratified the agreements on Russian troop withdrawal and on social guarantees for Russian military pensioners with 66 votes in favor. The Riigikogu added four declarations to both agreements in the law ratifying the agreements.

President Meri and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the agreements on 26 July 1994. Meri has been criticized, among others by factions in the government coalition, for signing agreements which are unfavorable to Estonia because they legalize the presence of about 10,000 Russian ex-servicemen in Estonia.

Next, Estonia and Russia should exchange letters ratifying the agreements. [passage omitted]

Envoy to Moscow Receives Foreign Ministry Note

WS2512092195 Tallinn BNS in English 1912 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Dec 22, BNS — The Estonian Ambassador to Russia, Mart Helme, was called to the foreign ministry in Moscow on Friday to receive a note regarding court proceedings in Estonia over the deportation of a radical Russian activist.

The activist, Pyotr Rozhok, has appealead a decision by the Estonian migration authorities on his deportation from Estonia.

Aleksander Udaltsev, senior official in charge of relations with the Baltics at the Russian foreign ministry, said he and the head of the ministry's 2nd department had handed the ambassador a note in which Russia expresses hope that Rozhok would be allowed to appear in court in Estonia in time.

The next court session on the case is scheduled for Feb. 1. As Rozhok is a Russian citizen, he needs an Estonian visa.

Rozhok, proclaimed the representative of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's radical nationalist Liberal Democratic Party in Estonia, was deported from this Baltic country on March 24 on charges of anti-constitutional activity.

The decision was protested in court by his wife, who stayed in Estonia.

The trial was adjourned after first court sessions in early July as Rozhok said he needed more time to examine all the papers.

Foreign ministry officials in Tallinn said Rozhok on Thursday had sent the Estonian ambassador a letter in which he complained about the prolonged trial procedure and sought a three-month visa so that he could himself deal with the matter in Estonia.

Rozhok was reported to have sent similar letters to the Russian president and the prime minister.

Mari-Ann Kelam, spokeswoman for the Estonian foreign ministry, said officials were planning no special handling of Rozhok's visa application.

During the meeting at the Russian foreign ministry, also some issues regarding the recently ratified Estonian-Russian treaties were discussed.

"We asked the ambassador to give some explanations regarding ratification of the treaties and we got them," Udaltsev said.

Russia's Gazprom Plans To Build Methanol Plant

WS2212153195 Tallinn BNS in English 1300 GMT 22 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Dec 22, BNS — The Russian state-owned gas company Gazprom, owner of the Nitrofert chemicals factory in the northeast Estonian city of Kohtla-Jarve, is planning to put up a methanol plant on the premises. The cost of the project is estimated at 230 million to 240 million USD.

Gazprom is seeking approval of the Estonian government for the investment, the Aripaev business newspaper wrote Friday. Economics Minister Andres Lipstok told the paper Estonia is interested in the plan.

The planned capacity of the plant is 1,000 tons of methanol a day, two thirds of which Gazprom hopes to export mainly to Germany.

Nitrofert Director General Nikolay Kutashov said Gazprom has invited international tenders of technology for the plant. The results will be known at the end of January.

In his words, the building of the factory may take two to three years. The ammonia plant standing on the site at present will be pulled down.

Methanol is a widely used raw material in the chemical industry.

Estonia sold the Nitrofert factory to Gazprom in the course of privatization in 1993. The factory's turnover last year was 300 million kroons and profit, 15 million kroons. The management expects a turnover of 447 million kroons for 1995.

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